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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Pop, L. (2010). Parents and children: communist mindsets reflected in the primary political socialization of young people in Romania today. *Studia Politica: Romanian Political Science Review*, 10(4), 657-708. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-446679>

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Parents and Children

Communist Mindsets Reflected in the Primary Political Socialization of Young People in Romania Today

LETITIA POP

Socialisation is a process which takes place in all societies, without exception, although its methods and contents are often different. It aims to teach desirable attitudes with the scope of "properly" integrating a new member of the society according to the specific values and norms of the community and is utterly important in the development of any child: without it, one's behaviour would be considered deviant. This process bears numerous variables common to all societies. It is only the content that changes according to the culture, the beliefs, the norms, myths, rituals, customs and other such behaviours specific to a society. The socialisation process happens in various steps common to almost all societies. There are also numerous ways of teaching these norms, but also different environments which contribute to this transmission. The first step that must be put in evidence is primary socialisation. It is "the complex process by which the family transmits to its descendants the first notions, signs, symbols that help them form their habits and behaviours"¹. It is also the process of acquiring the basic models of human behaviour. In the socialisation process many different sources transmit to the child basic knowledge. They are called *socialising agencies*. The first and possibly most important one is the family. In the first phase the references of the child concerning any and all of his issues are his parents. The parents represent usually the whole environment of the child since his birth. Primary socialisation usually starts at birth and partially ends more or less around the age of seven. At this age, other psychobiological changes occur: the child becomes increasingly aware of what is happening around him, in the family but also in the outside life². In time, the child will derive his attention towards more abstract concepts, trying to understand them in spite of their inexistence as solid objects. It is in this phase of the child's development and socialisation process that another fundamental socialising agency intervenes.

School as a socialising agency is not the only one to appear in a child's environment, but comes along with other agencies such as peer groups or opinion leaders such as teachers³. Starting school is an important step in one's development. The until-then rather narrow environment broadens considerably. One of the main qualities of school is that it adds up but also nuances the family's contribution to the socialisation process. Knowledge, as well as discipline, work, adapting to others and to different requests, integrating peer groups, all these must be interiorised by the youngster, considering they represent new situations, different from the ones he dealt with in

¹ Maria VOINEA, *Sociologia familiei*, Editura Universității București, București, 1993, p. 112.

² *Ibidem*, p. 114.

³ Frederick ELKIN, Gerald HANDEL, *The Child and Society. The Process of Socialisation*, fourth edition, Random House, New York, 1984, p. 250.

the family circle¹. The secondary socialisation prolongs itself through adolescence, a very delicate age where the main part of one's personality is created. It is now that the attitudes and opinions of the young people are created concerning many themes of social life. These attitudes are often influenced by the family and by peer groups, as well as the other socialising agencies, but sometimes they do not find their origins in those spaces. Adolescents can form their own opinions and thoughts by combining the values and norms transmitted by the different agencies or by transforming them one way or another². Each agency contributes differently to the formation of each one's personality and attitude towards a specific field. We must not forget nowadays the great role played by the media, a rather new and fundamental actor in the socialisation process of young people. By media, we understand an encompassing range of audiovisual sources of information such as the press, TV, radio and especially Internet. They represent fundamental sources of information taking in consideration their wide spreading and popularity among children and teens³. Hence socialisation is not only a long lasting process, but it is a lifelong adaptation of the norms and values one constantly interiorised, even if its basis can be found in childhood and early adult life.

As a consequence of this process, the attitudes and opinions created concern very different topics, ranging from religion to gastronomy. The modelling of one's behaviour is influenced by the notions interiorised during the cognitive process, the information received from different networks, as well as by personal and subjective experiences, sociological, cultural, psychological, economic or other types of variables. One of the domains the youngster makes its entry during the socialisation process cognitively and affectively is the political realm. This process is not only comprehending the knowledge concerning some events which are taking place in a country, but also understanding them along with other more abstract phenomena which affect the youngster one way or another, more or less directly, forming positive or negative impressions over concepts, institutions, personalities, parties etc.⁴. Even if knowledge is important in understanding politics, the affective component is not to be neglected. That is why family is considered as being the one agency whose existence is fundamental in the formation of children. Political socialisation is indispensable in modern societies and the mission of the school is to perpetuate the political ideas of the power in place⁵. Therefore children can assume from the family political socialisation the beliefs, values, attitudes, norms, behaviours etc. of their parents. With age, the child comes under the influence of other socialising agencies such as school, peer groups or the media. At the same time, he begins to be able to elaborate, synthesize and create ideas by himself. This whole process does not take place smoothly. Through its nature and by the fact that many changes, ruptures and modifications appear, the political socialisation process is long-lasting and subject to adjustments. Moreover, discontinuities appear not only because of the contradictory messages sent by the numerous socialisation agencies, but also from the autonomy

¹ *Ibidem*.

² Richard T. SCHAEFER, *Sociology*, second edition, McGraw-Hill Inc., New York, 1986, p. 100.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 102.

⁴ Vasile Sebastian DÂNCU, "Socializarea politică și achiziția vocabularului politic", *Sociologie Românească*, nr. 3, 1999, p. 51.

⁵ Samuel KOENIG, *Man and Society. The Basic Teachings of Sociology*, Barnes&Noble, New York, 1957, p. 155.

each adolescent aspires to and the purpose of defining his own identity by opposing to that of the parents.

This study focuses on analyzing continuities and discontinuities in the political culture and of parents and children and the way this has repercussions on the political socialisation of the adolescents and young people. We will try first to analyze if the family seems to play the most important role in the process of political socialisation of the children. The general framework of this analysis will aim at assessing the way the family and more specifically the parents contribute more concretely to the political socialisation of their children. The hypothesis this study departs first and foremost from the fact that the family, as the agency specialized by excellence in the transmission of knowledge, but especially attitudes, opinions and feelings towards a precise topic and/or field of interest, contributes widely to the reproduction of these same or similar conceptions of political life. Furthermore, a case study will be examined in detail, which will allow taking the first hypothesis further. The chosen case study will be that of the Romanian society.

The Romanian political culture was subject to many changes in the last decades, thus affecting the individuals' perceptions over the political field as the norms, values and attitudes which have been inculcated by the various socialising agencies were very different from one regime to another. The very manner of conveying them was different, as were the expectations and the mere political values. The second hypothesis this study introduces is the fact that the parents' political socialisation during the communist regime left important traces in the political socialisation of the children today, contributing to a reproduction of those behaviours, supposing that the family political socialisation bears a considerable importance. How did the fall of the communist regime and the transition that ensued favour the continuity or discontinuity? Is the political culture of the past regime still powerful? Does it still represent an important part of the family political socialisation content nowadays in Romania? If so, how can we explain this resistance? It is actually the result of a failure of the resocialisation process during the post communist era? These are the questions we will attempt to give an answer to.

Viewing the individual as being determined by his environment, be it school, family, media or other institutions, to think or act in a certain way, inscribes the study mainly in a structuralist-functionalist paradigm. The idea behind it is that there are structures which are more or less independent one towards another which govern everyday events and actions of the individuals. Every realm would determine certain kind of attitudes hence the structure would represent a frame in which the individual is inscribed¹. Each of these systems is characterized by the existence of internal interaction and relationships "in terms of status and roles"². To Parsons, the social systems he calls *action systems* "are structured about three integrative foci: the individual actor, the interactive systems and a system of cultural patterning"³. These three systems function together and are interdependent. They inscribe in a wider system and contain smaller systems. All of them influence the individual in their own

¹ George GONOS, "Situation Versus Frame: the Interactionist and the Structuralist Analyses of Everyday Life", *American Sociological Review*, vol. 42, no. 6, December 1977, p. 857.

² Talcott PARSONS, *The System of Modern Societies*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ:Prentice Hall, 1971, p. 26.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 27.

way. This theory puts an emphasis on the organic unity of society and its absolute necessities in order to work. For instance, education would be a fundamental necessity of a society in order for it to perpetuate its political system and values. Socialisation allows the society to achieve equilibrium and "create conformity to culturally appropriate roles and socially supported norms"¹. Parsons affirms that he "attribute[s] primacy of integrative function to the social system"², which shows the position given to the social system as compared to the individual. The social system is the one that must integrate the individual; it is not the individual who integrates the system. The individual is still important in this view, but in a different way, as the paradigm attempts to understand how his behaviour is influenced and determined by these numerous systems of society although the same theory can be seen as a deterministic one. In a holistic view, the scope is to show how the social steps, processes, events and environments an individual goes through influence his way of thinking, acting and perceiving various elements. Moreover, it must be said that the systems have to be conceived as open and "engaged in continual interchange of inputs and outputs with their environments"³. We must therefore understand that although the functionalist view regards social systems as heavily influencing individual behaviour, it must not be understood that there is no interaction whatsoever. On the contrary, interaction is present everywhere, between the systems, the subsystems, the individual and the systems etc. "No other social institution accomplishes that many functions; this makes the family the basic unit of society."⁴ The functionalist perspective emphasizes the structure and functions of family systems. The family may be considered as a system that is influenced and influences in its turn a more general environment, the society, in a relative equilibrium. The theory places the explanations of the family phenomena at the level of the structure and the functions, the relations between systems and subsystems, not at the individual level. Parsons believes that family is a subsystem which communicates with the entire social environment⁵. Like any other subsystem, the family must accomplish certain functions such as reproduction to perpetuate a community or a society, socialisation of the young members to transmit the dominant cultural models, emotional support and care, offering a status etc.⁶. Thus in this view, the family accomplishes internal and external functions. Among the latter, one of the most important is that of socialising the young generation. Parsons states that:

"There is reason to believe that among the learned elements of personality in certain respects the most stable and most enduring are the major value-orientation patterns and there is much evidence that these are laid down in childhood and are not on a large scale subject to drastic alteration during adult life"⁷.

¹ web.grinnell.edu/courses/soc/s00/soc111-01/IntroTheories/Functionalism.html, Kent McCLELLAND, *Functionalism* (consulted on the 25.05.2010).

² Talcott PARSONS, *The System of Modern Societies*, cit., p. 5.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

⁴ James W. COLEMAN, Donald R. CRESSEY, *Social Problems*, Harper&Row, London, 1990, p. 148.

⁵ Talcott PARSONS, *The System of Modern Societies*, cit., p. 7.

⁶ Raluca POPESCU, *Introducere în sociologia familiei: familia românească în societatea contemporană*, Polirom, Iași, 2009, pp. 21-23.

⁷ Talcott PARSONS, *The System of Modern Societies*, cit., p. 208.

As the basis of this process done in childhood is assured by the parental socialising agency, we can hypothesize that it plays indeed a most important role in the inoculation of attitudes and behaviours regarding different fields and domains. Still, Parsons does not understand socialisation as a form of social control or "invasion", but merely as a form of learning "the patterns of behaviour expected of persons in his statuses in his society"¹.

This theoretical perspective must still be nuanced by another one, which we will also be using in the current study. As the study departs from several hypothesis and questions and there is no fixed response to them, the interactionist perspective must also be taken into consideration. Although the study will mainly follow the structuralist view of the existence of several systems which determine the individual's attitudes and perceptions, it is impossible to rule out the role played by the interaction between individuals. We are hereby assessing the role of several socialising agencies on the outcome of a political socialisation, but we may also accept the fact that this outcome would not be fully determined by these agencies, but also by their mixing and by a personal view of the political realm, created as a consequence on the one hand of the role of the agencies, but also of one's personality, goals, intellectual development and personal experiences. Symbolic interactionism parts from the premise that "human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them"², but also that "the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows"³. The third premise is that "those meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters"⁴. The idea here is thus that "the meanings that things have for human beings are central in their own right"⁵ and not necessarily determined in a certain way or by certain instances. Evidently, social as well as psychological and why not medical aspects are to take in consideration in this view. The determination of the opinions, attitudes and behaviours is thus considerably reduced to the mere interaction between individuals. This view is not to be neglected and we believe that the two paradigms are not necessarily excluding one another. They rather complete themselves, as the social systems may determine one's political socialisation and his or her formation of attitudes, but this process can also be balanced by the interaction which always exists at an individual level. We can conclude that the two theoretical frameworks are different in the way they orient the socialisation process: vertically or horizontally.

The first part of the study will present socialisation in general as a fundamental process, encompassing its agencies, means and scopes. The attention will then be focused on political socialisation, which forms part of the socialisation process but represents a distinct part of it. After having overviewed this, we will focus on the study case. The study will show how the Romanian political culture was shaped in the two distinct regimes: the communist and post communist ones. Before assessing

¹ *Ibidem*.

² Herbert BLUMER, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1986, p. 2.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

the continuities and discontinuities, the first question arising is that of the way the political socialisation of the children and young generation was done during the communist regime. More precisely, according to the topic of the paper, the communist regime in Romania will be presented with an emphasis on its intervention in the everyday life, in the educational realm and in the Romanian culture. It is obvious that this process was different than that of a democratic system if only through the characteristics of a totalitarian regime. Two elements will allow us to attempt an evaluation of this process. On the one hand, it will be necessary to first present the way education was conducted during the communist regime, what were the regime's expectations concerning the young generation and how was this manifested. This perspective is rather theoretical and more objective in its presentation of the regime's actions. Moreover, in order to be able to make a comparison, we will quickly overview the school political socialisation today, in post-communist Romania. In order to do this, we will use some textbooks from subjects which could bring a contribution to the political socialisation process. This part can only analyze on a theoretical level this dimension. As we are interested to evaluate this at an individual level, we will proceed on the one hand to the presentation of an already-conducted study concerning the interest proven by young people today towards politics. This will help us have an initial overview of the situation.

Hence the first generation which will be taken into consideration is the one that was born, raised and educated under the communist regime and had already reached an adult age at the time of the 1989 Revolution. Considering the fact that this generation had no knowledge of a different type of regime, a different existence or social order, it had to go through a resocialisation phase in order to acquire the new norms and values of a transitional democratic regime, which not only supposed more personal, cultural, social and economic freedom, but also different characteristics, new "rules" and challenges. This process is not an easy one. It is long lasting and is subject to many evolutions, transformations, successes and failures. Moreover, it is obviously different from individual to individual. The specificity of this generation, which we will call the "parents' generation" for easier reference, is the common background of the individuals, which is that created by the regime. Obviously, the family socialisation would have to be taken also into consideration, but the constraints of the study do not allow us to go that deep into assessing the political socialisation of this generation. Hence we will start the study from the assumption of the political socialisation of the parents' generation as being highly influenced or at least up to a certain degree by the all-encompassing communist regime in Romania. The other part of the study is interested in the family political socialisation of young people today as well as the opinions of the younger generation on different topics which are linked to the political realm. After having overviewed the school curriculum concerning political notions, in order to understand the general framework of political socialisation in post-communist Romania as well as already existent studies concerning the opinions of young people today concerning politics, we will focus our attention on direct testimonials taken with the help of semi-structured interviews. The purpose will be to link the two dimensions in order to observe the possible determination between the first and the second. This is why the interviews will be taken from parent and child couples, this allowing us to try to understand the reproduction and determination which could exist or, on the contrary, the rupture between the two generations' attitudes and behaviours towards politics.

The importance of the family in the political socialisation will be observed through the way in which parents and children seem to share same political opinions, attitudes, behaviours, norms, values and positioning. Also, the actual communication between the two generations will aim to be analyzed by the means of examples and comparison. The third part of the study will examine in an empirical manner the political socialisation of the parents and of the children and the manner in which the former could have influenced the latter. Our focus will be first to determine up to what point the children are influenced by the family political socialisation the communist heritage in the Romanian political culture and the way it entrenched a certain view of politics among the young generation today, through the mechanisms of family political socialisation and transmission of attitudes and opinions towards the political field.

A more subjective view of the perception of the political socialisation during the communist regime will be allowed by the accomplishment of some semi-structured interviews during which we will try to figure out what are generally the perceptions today of that period of time and of the political socialisation imposed by the communist regime. In order to assess the degree of the influence the school education had on the parents' political socialisation, some questions of the interview will focus on understanding their attitudes and opinions towards communist matters as well as on their attempt of remembering some life situations they lived under the past regime, and some of the elements learnt in school which are linked to this dimension. The interviews will be, as we already mentioned, conducted on couple formed of a parent and a child (see the sample composition in Appendix). The interviews will be taken separately, in order for the respondents not to get influenced by their sibling's answers. The questions addressed to the parents will regard a few topics such as general information concerning the interest proven towards the political field, memories and views of the communist regime including school political socialisation, perceptions of the current political scene, but also the manifestation of the family political socialisation by evoking events, examples, discussions between the parent and the child concerning the political scene of today and of the past regime. The questions addressed to the child will focus also on assessing his interest towards politics, but also opinions and attitudes towards the communist regime (in order to understand how the parent transmitted his own perceptions to the child and the degree in which the latter interiorized them as being his own or as forming part of his opinion concerning the Romanian political heritage), the political scene today and evoking the family political socialisation through memories and examples of discussions and events shared by the two generations and contributing to this complex process.

The recruiting method that was used was the "snowball", which means that with the help of already known people, we were able to find respondents who directed us towards other respondents. In order for us to be able to receive relevant answers, we considered the respondents forming part of the younger generation should be at least 15 years old and at most 25. This way, as adolescents, they find themselves in full political socialisation process from both most important agencies: school and family. At this age, they have already received a school formation, although it is still in process, and are able to express a position concerning politics. At 25, the individuals have not had time to enter the communist school political socialisation or through the media or other agencies which contributed to this process before 1989. At the same time, they are susceptible of already having a formation and a structured

opinion concerning politics, which they were able to create as a consequence of their interaction with numerous and varied political socialisation agencies. This is why we believe this age interval is the most relevant for our study.

Concerning the parents, the main criteria which they have to fulfil is being old enough to have followed at least high school education during the communist regime, and being born after the installation of this regime in Romania (after 1945). Therefore their age range will then be of about 40 to 65 years old. We will also attempt to choose respondents from different backgrounds, with different social, economic and educational levels. This would allow us to understand if we can find a thinking pattern which would be linked to those variables. The sample we will need in order for the study to reveal accurate answers is of at least 15 couples parent-children, which means at least 30 respondents as a total. The interviews will last about 30 minutes and will take place in commonly convened spaces. The interviews will be based on some questions prepared in advance, but as an instrument of research and operation of the hypothesis, the interview will not be limited to those questions. Being semi-structured, the interviews will leave the space to explore and discover unanticipated elements. The interviews took place between the 10th of April (the first interview) and the 16th of May (the last interview). Hence the fieldwork duration expanded on a period of 5 weeks due to timing difficulties: some of the respondents were not available in a certain period of time, requesting to postpone the interviews for several days of even weeks. Still, considering the tools at disposition, the interview method seems to be the best one as it permits flexibility and is versatile for many kinds of topics and fits all individuals, as it only requires them to remember some elements of the past or give their opinions. Being a qualitative method, it also allows the comparison between the parents' and the children's attitudes, which would be more difficult to do for instance with the help of simple questionnaires or other strictly quantitative methods.

As we already stated, the study is twofold. The elements which are followed are the importance of the family in the political socialisation of the young generation today and the cause-effect relation between the two elements taking into consideration the communist socialisation dimension. The text corpus of the first part of the study will encompass the main writings on what concerns the socialisation process, with all its implications, the socialisation agencies, methods, etc. Authors like Richard Schaefer, Ralph Linton, Pierre Bourdieu or Raymond Boudon will be evoked along with other studies in order to establish this framework. The same part will also use theoretical papers on political socialisation such as Annick Percheron's *Socialisation Politique* or Maurice Duverger's *Sociologie de la Politique* will represent the basis of the analysis. The second part will use studies such as that of Mariana Momanu on education during the communist regime, as well as official issues of the regime regulating the same element. Also, we will exploit the curriculum of some classes taught nowadays in Romanian schools with the help of official documents and textbooks. The second part of the study will end with the presentation of already conducted studies on topic close to that of our focus: the attitudes and interest of young people today towards politics. The last part will be based exclusively on self-conducted interviews, which will take shape in the form of an empirical study of the influences observed from one generation to another.

THE POLITICAL SOCIALISATION PROCESS: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

General Approach of the Process of Socialisation

Human beings are and become social beings. The behaviour of individuals is decisively determined by their social environment. The question that arises is that of the innate and the acquired. Each individual has a personality that is on one hand partly due to his own characteristics (biological, psychological) and on the other hand also due to his achievements, to all he has learned and internalized since birth through his social environment. The biological inheritance and socialisation process both play an important role in human development¹. It is difficult to define the word "personality", but according to some sociologists it consists of "the characteristic organization of habits, attitudes, values, and emotional characteristics of an individual that eventually shape his behaviour". Studies by sociologists have shown that the environment is a sociological factor determining the type of personality that each individual will develop². As R.E. Park says, "men are not born humans, they become during the process of education"³. Sociologist Ralph Linton affirms that personalities are "dynamic continuums"⁴ provoked by the interaction between the individual, the society and the culture. The environmental factors which seem to be the most important in the formation of an individual's personality are people and objects.

"The behaviour of the members of any society and the form of the majority of the objects they use are stereotypes and can be described as cultural models. When we say that the personality in formation of an individual is shaped by the culture, we consider in fact its shaping through the experience which derives from the contact between the individual and the stereotypes."⁵

There are various types of such influence which overlap. The most important are those derived from the culturally shaped behaviour of others towards the child (since birth) and those derived from the observation or systematic learning by the individual of the attitudes and behaviours specific to his or her society⁶.

The purpose of any society is that of maintaining its equilibrium and social order. This scope can be attained by the good functioning of the elements of social structure, groups, communities, institutions and by the efficient integration of the individuals in the different social spheres. In order to accomplish this, society created and perfected specific socialisation and social integration mechanisms.

¹ Richard T. SCHAEFER, *Sociology*, cit., pp. 84-85.

² Samuel KOENIG, *Man and Society...cit.*, p. 56.

³ Maria VOINEA, *Sociologia familiei*, cit., p. 61.

⁴ Ralph LINTON, *Fundamentul cultural al personalității*, Rom. transl. by Sergiu Săraru, Editura Științifică, București, 1968, p. 47.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 164.

⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 164-165.

"The socialisation represents the fundamental social process by which every society projects, reproduces and realizes by adequate conducts of its members, its cultural normative model."¹

Therefore the socialisation concept defines the processes, mechanisms and institutions with the help of which the society reproduces itself.

"R. Pinot once said that 'every day society is submitted to a terrible invasion: within it a multitude of small barbarians are born. They would quickly overthrow the whole social order and all institutions of the society, if they were not disciplined and educated'. In other words, it is socialisation, and mainly that received in the family setting, that saves existing societies from destruction each time a new generation grows up."²

Socialisation is the process by which individuals interiorise through interaction and more or less consciously norms, standards, values and attitudes of the society they live in³; it is therefore specific to a human group and to a specific culture. Values are ideal principles that govern a society or group of persons (e.g. freedom or compulsion, patriotism etc.) which in turn induce behaviours considered desirable. The norms are models of behaviour, rules of conduct, and collective ways of acting, thinking and feeling specific to a certain community. They are imposed in a more or less restrictive way when an individual adheres to a group. The rules of politeness, hygiene, level of vocabulary and language standards are specific to the social community, also related to the status and roles of each person. The norms derive in part from the values, being actually more constraining. Most often, deviance, that is to say the departure more or less durable from the accepted standards, leads to social exclusion. The culture of a social group and its membership are the result of socialisation.

The definitions of socialisation are numerous and varied. In general, socialisation is the phenomenon which contributes to interiorizing each one's status, that is to say, the position occupied by an individual in a social setting, possibly from hierarchical standpoint⁴. Also, it contributes to learning his or her role, that is to say the behaviour expected from an individual based on the status or social position he occupies. In general socialisation and political socialisation more precisely contribute to the construction of the socio-political identity and group affiliation of every person⁵. Socialisation teaches the youngster how to behave properly according to the environment where he finds himself in and the role and status that comes with it: he is a child in the family, a student at school, a football player in a team, a spectator at a play, etc. Also, this way he is being prepared for adulthood, when he will become a doctor, an official, a parent, but also a citizen⁶. Even if today, in principle, social mobility (the ability to

¹ Maria VOINEA, *Sociologia familiei*, cit., p. 61.

² Bela C. MADAY, Lorand B. SZALAY, "Psychological Correlates of Family Socialisation in the United States and Korea", in Thomas R. WILLIAMS, *Socialisation and Communication in Primary Groups*, Mouton Publishers, The Hague-Paris, 1975, p. 81.

³ Annick PERCHERON, *La socialisation politique*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1993, p. 32.

⁴ P.W. MUSGRAVE, *The Sociology of Education*, second edition, Methuen&Co Ltd, University Paperbacks, London, 1972, p. 18.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

change the status and/or social group by birth) is no longer an exception in most societies, there remains a social determinism and a preferential allocation of certain attitudes or professions based on the society and social group the child was born in. For example, "a woman is more likely than a man to be a kindergarten teacher while he is more likely to be a bus driver than a woman is"¹.

The human being becomes what sociologists call "socialised" gradually, through a multitude of experiences throughout his existence. The social environment is the one that provides role models and behaviour patterns through the presence and actions of people who surround the child. If the circle is at first limited to the mother or in this case the nuclear family, it grows gradually over time to include the extended family, friends, classmates, teachers and finally, outsiders. The image that the youngster makes of himself is much influenced by the ideas of those around him. For the different situations he will have to deal with, the child learns the codes of conduct².

Definitions and Methods of Socialisation

Socialisation occurs in several stages throughout a person's life. The primary socialisation occurs in childhood whereas secondary socialisation begins in adolescence and prolongs all through maturity³. There are different ways of learning values and norms: interaction, often performed in children through play, conditioning, that is to say, repeating until the movement becomes natural, observation of the behaviour of others and its adoption or imitation, reinforcement by reward or punishment for some action⁴. Thus the first thing that we must emphasize is the fact that socialisation is a very dynamic process. It is not a passive inculcation of information from the adults to the youngsters, but a participative process⁵.

Imitation is the first attribute of the child at an early age (early imitations). He will be inclined to imitate his parents, educators or anyone close to him and whose attitude can be a model. Children above 12 years old and adolescents prefer, however, not to copy the behaviour of adults around them. They will rather choose to imitate peers in order to integrate in the group's environment, the class or young people of his age⁶. The behaviourist approach believes that children are "empty vessels" waiting to be filled with knowledge and social norms. The main way of teaching them is the method of positive rewards (reinforcement). In this context, parents, teachers and other authority figures are supposed to provide young people with examples of desirable behaviour throughout their growth⁷.

¹ Sidney BIJOU, "Reinforcement History and Socialisation", in Ronald HOPPE, Alexander G. MILTON, Edward C. SIMMEL, *Early Experiences and the Process of Socialisation*, Academic Press, New York, 1970, p. 45.

² Samuel KOENIG, *Man and Society...cit.*, pp. 53-54.

³ Maria VOINEA, *Sociologia familiei*, cit., p. 64.

⁴ Talcott PARSONS, *The System of Modern Societies*, cit., p. 209.

⁵ Maria VOINEA, *Sociologia familiei*, cit., p. 64.

⁶ Brian COATES, Willard W. HARTUP, "The Role of Imitation in Childhood Socialisation", in Ronald HOPPE, Alexander G. MILTON, Edward C. SIMMEL, *Early Experiences...cit.*, pp. 110-139.

⁷ Peter J. KUTNICK, *Relationships in the Primary School Classroom*, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd., London, 1988, pp. 12-14.

The unique personality of each young person, their attitude, training habits, customs and skills appreciated as being correct and desirable in a society are factors determined by the history of reinforcement of each one to the extent that these forms of behaviour are often based on family lifestyle¹. They are not only features of the culture, but are also typical in geographical and sociological environments of the respective society. We must nevertheless bear in mind that other factors determine the behaviour and the creation of the personality of the young person, including past events, genetic variables or the motivations and life conditions of each. During adolescence (*the societal phase*) development focuses on social relations, with emphasis on language and discourse². Development also leans towards a peer groups. From the moment the behaviour reinforced and punished by adults may be reversed in a group dominated by peers, stimuli and responses can acquire conflicting functions. The individual responds in different ways depending on the situation and the group in which he is confined to at a certain moment in time³.

The Socialisation Agencies: Who Are They?

The family – the first agency. The concept of socialisation brings together the efforts of different vectors of socialisation, each exerting different effects on children; they are called agencies of socialisation. Among the agencies of socialisation, we can name the parents, the teachers, media, peers, etc. Family and school both put an emphasis on academic achievement, although often in different ways⁴. The most important agency of primary socialisation is the family, with which children have continuous contact. It is an institution that grants a child's basic education, the cultural and socialising functions being its second most important purposes after biological reproduction⁵. In contemporary societies, the family still acts as a powerful agency of socialisation, especially regarding the primary roles and traditional knowledge. Among the main functions of the family is the socialisation of young people so that they become members of the society where they live. The family being an affectionate and protective environment assures to the children security, care, moral and material support. It introduces children to social and personal relationships, his first such experiences being those with the family members. In this group, the youngsters are for the first time treated as persons in their own right. They learn how to interact, how to share and collaborate, how to compete or even engage in conflicts⁶. This develops in them the capacities of dealing with the social situations he will face as an adolescent and then as an adult. The family is the reference group in the primary socialisation and the child will adopt its practices in his future relationships⁷. The family is thus not a passive transmitter but a main participant to the child's social evolution. There are two dimensions of family socialisation: the unconscious and the conscious one⁸.

¹ Sidney BIJOU, "Reinforcement History...cit.", pp. 43-56.

² *Ibidem*.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ Frederick ELKIN, Gerald HANDEL, *The Child and Society...cit.*, p. 123.

⁵ Maria VOINEA, *Sociologia familiei*, cit., p. 13; pp. 44-46.

⁶ *Ibidem* p. 13.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ Maurice DUVERGER, *Sociologie de la politique: éléments de science politique*, PUF, Paris, 1988, p. 136.

The family is in itself part of a certain community and has a certain social status. By birth, the child will be placed in society according to his family's background and he will be socialised according to the norms and values of this specific community. The youngsters will be prepared to integrate it and not another one. The "location" of the infant in the society will evidently affect his experiences, his attitudes as an adult and will also determine to a significant degree the outcome of his socialisation¹. Often, there is a reproduction of norms and values specific to each family by the younger members. The family thus teaches the basic notions necessary to the integration into society and social groups also by inducing the systems of value and ways of thinking that are specific, for example related to religion, political orientations, tastes or prejudice. It is here that the child learns his first notions in the field of politics, including basic political vocabulary. A degree of adjustment obviously takes place later on in adult life, but it is "highly preconditioned by the socialisation experience of the early years"². The socialising and personalizing process made in the family is the mean by which the young person develops gradually as a person among others and at the same time learns how to develop relationships with others³. Thus, according to the political interest shown in the family, the youngster is likely to reproduce it and have a similar attitude. Insofar as the values of families from different social classes differ, they may come into contradiction with the teachings of the school, teachers, etc.⁴. Here it must be said that among the outcomes of socialisation, some are intended and others are unintended, some are direct and other indirect⁵. Therefore the socialisation that takes in the family will have a strong impact over the socialisation exerted by the other socialising agencies, and the first such case is school⁶.

School and the importance of the hidden curriculum. The socialising aspect of the life of a young person is also supported by the institution of school. The school is the main agency of secondary socialisation⁷. It is first responsible for aspects related to social integration (the rules of citizenship, of civility), which aims at social cohesion. Then, it aims to teaching the knowledge necessary for a future occupation of the young person as well as the culture common to all the individuals of the same social group⁸. Students are expected to learn to be autonomous in managing their knowledge as well as the relationships with different people from their environment.

"By involving children with teachers and classmates, the school plays an important part in lessening the emotional dependence on the family."⁹

¹ Frederick ELKIN, Gerald HANDEL, *The Child and Society...*cit., p. 128-131.

² Bela C. MADAY, Lorand B. SZALAY, "Psychological Correlates of Family Socialisation...cit.", p. 81.

³ Ivor MORRISH, *The Sociology of Education: An Introduction*, George Allen&Unwin Limited, London, 1978, p. 170.

⁴ Samuel KOENIG, *Man and Society...*cit., p. 130.

⁵ Robert E. DOWSE, John HUGHES, "The Family, the School and the Political Socialisation Process", *Sociology*, vol. 5, no. 21, 1971, p. 21.

⁶ Frederick ELKIN, Gerald HANDEL, *The Child and Society...*cit., p. 151.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 148.

⁸ *Ibidem*

⁹ *Ibidem*

Also, the children are for the first time taught to establish relations with people outside the family and integrate in a wider social order. So the first social mission of school is to loosen the ties of the child and his family, the medium where he had lived until then. The child's autonomy is greatly encouraged. Thus social relationships are the ones that come to exist for a child in school even before he meets with the cognitive dimension of this agency. They are established between the child and his peers, his teacher(s) and other adults that exist in the school environment (for instance the principal). The child will learn how to relate and interact with each one of them as different actors from his environment¹. Moreover, school places an emphasis on complying with rules more than the family does. To the formal curriculum that is taught in school adds the hidden or informal curriculum. The children learn to submit to an authority, to be disciplined, to respect the rules. Its effects are also visible in the conception that the child has of himself, gender stereotypes, attitudes, opinions etc.². School is therefore more than simply teaching general knowledge. Social relationships are a fundamental outcome of schooling and represent a natural and desirable component of the school environment.

According to Émile Durkheim, school responds to the need for homogenization of society, for the harmonious existence of social life³. School education is a major activity of any human society, since its future existence is conditioned by passing the legacy to the young members: "Education provided by schools rationalizes family experience and transforms it into a social potentiality"⁴. Philosopher Auguste Comte also thought that human progress depended heavily on education and that universal education was a necessity⁵. On the contrary, conflict theorists like Karl Marx accept the fact that school teaches values and customs of society but add the fact that it also reinforces social divisions, especially concerning those between classes. They also believe that the system socialises students into the values dictated by those in power, the level of social change hence being relatively insignificant. Often, economic opportunities determine a reproduction of social status that is undesirable but inevitable. The conflict theorists consider the effects of centralized education as harmful, only reflecting the values, interests and lifestyles of the most powerful social groups while ignoring those of ethnic and cultural minorities⁶. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron both criticize contemporary educational systems as enabling social discrimination; to them, the systems promote access to education for young people from high socio-cultural backgrounds, for example through the use of a certain language, making it very difficult to train children from social classes that bear a lower cultural capital. Thus, Bourdieu believes that the system encourages and contributes to social reproduction, the school not being "liberating" as many people of popular classes background conceived: "The school system is a vehicle privileges"⁷. To Bourdieu, school

¹ Peter J. KUTNICK, *Relationships in the Primary School...cit.*, pp. 9-12.

² Basil BERNSTEIN, *Studii de sociologie a educației*, Rom. transl. by Rola and Fred Mahler, Ed. Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1978, pp. 195-205.

³ Annick PERCHERON, *La socialisation politique*, cit., p. 22.

⁴ Vasile Sebastian DÂNCU, "Socializarea politică...cit.", p. 54.

⁵ Samuel KOENIG, *Man and Society...cit.*, pp. 150-151; p. 153; p. 155; p. 161.

⁶ Richard T. SCHAEFER, *Sociology*, cit., p. 101; pp. 424-430.

⁷ Pierre BOURDIEU, *Questions de Sociologie*, Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1984, p. 150.

"is not just a place where you learn things, information, technology; it is also an institution that awards titles, i.e. rights, and confers at the same time aspirations".

Thus, one effect of the current schooling system is the manipulation of the aspirations of each. The result of socialisation is conformity to the legitimate political order. What it must be said is that society nowadays evolves very rapidly and transmitting a certain heritage of the past is not sufficient anymore for achieving a successful socialisation. Education goes quickly out of date as compared to the children's aspirations. This is why there is often a feeling that school maintains a status quo of society. School changes slower than society does, also considering the fact that the teachers are one or two generations older than their pupils and also that it is difficult to modify a generalized country-wide schooling system. This is not a criticism, but a statement which assesses the situation; this is part of the socialisation process of a child in any developed society today and must be taken as such.

A Special Kind of Socialisation: The Political One

Theoretical Framework and Definitions

The studies on political socialisation of children started developing after 1959, when Herbert Hyman presented his first synthesis of the work previously done in the fields of psychology, sociology, pedagogy, etc. According to him:

"The individuals learn the political attitudes early in their life and in a complete manner and then they continue to manifest them"¹.

Thus according to him, political socialisation would only happen in the first 20 years of one's life and that political propaganda must first and foremost reach children, not adults. American political scientist David Easton² believes that political socialisation of youngsters happens in four stages: the child's awareness towards the political field develops, the personalization phase ensues where the child makes contact with the political field; he then judges the authority figures he came in contact with and in the last stage he manages to perceive all the authorities as a system. But Annick Percheron shows that the personalization is rather feeble for the children, becoming more powerful with age. Her studies showed that the youngsters experienced rather a distance towards the political field, which they perceived diffusely³.

From a theoretical perspective, a major problem represents the conciliation between cultural imperatives and the choices of each individual in a specific social situation. Pierre Bourdieu finds a middle path between determinism and individual choice. To him, the framework must overcome the alternatives of either determinism either complete freedom of choice. In his view, external references (norms, values, beliefs, etc) are only assimilated if compatible with the logics of the subjects according

¹ Maurice DUVERGER, *Sociologie de la politique...cit.*, p. 139.

² *Ibidem*, pp. 139-140.

³ Annick PERCHERON, *La socialisation politique*, cit., p. 169.

to their social situation. Thus the first experiences of a child have all the chances to become fundamentally important in his later formation on anticipations, expectations and motivations¹. With age comes the understanding of abstract concepts and with this, the comprehension of social relations and society in general². The concepts that are part of the political field often use symbols or abstract concepts such as nation, state or democracy. Pierre Bourdieu has a broad view of politics, which he sees as a symbolic activity. He believes that political socialisation represents more than the mere transmission of notions or political views. According to him, the socio-cultural environment of each individual counts very much during his socialisation in the creation of a *habitus*³. This concept represents a

“product of the internalization of the principles of a cultural arbitrary able to continue after the termination of the pedagogical action and thereby perpetuate in practice the principles of the internalized arbitrary”⁴.

The *habitus* is thus a result of the socialisation that has the effect of “inculcating practices and representations of the groups sharing the same living conditions”⁵, also representing “the starting point for the externalization of the internalized as opinions and behaviours”⁶. More precisely, it describes a type of conduct in different domains that is specific to a certain culture that the individual has durably acquired. The specificity of the *habitus* is its link to individual history and individual social class. It produces practices made possible and plausible by the interiorised mental elaborations: it enables the construction of perceptions, attitudes etc.⁷. Unpredictable adjustments can still intervene during its creation⁸. But the formation of this *habitus* determines a conformism and a social reproduction. Thus, there would be a privileged class enjoying high social, cultural, symbolic and sometimes economic capital that may play a determining role in the political field. Family and school both contribute to the formation of this *habitus*, in different ways.

Political socialisation is an extension towards the political sphere of the sociological concept of socialisation⁹. It is a process of acquisition of values, attitudes and behavioural patterns related to the political field; thus it represents the interiorizing of the political culture. This involves not only learning the prevailing beliefs of a society, but also coming to accept the political system, whatever its problems and limitations¹⁰. It enables youngsters to understand the link between the social and political life. In addition to the cognitive content, political socialisation also includes a large emotional content: it contributes to the formation of attitudes and feelings in relation to various

¹ Philippe BRAUD, *Sociologie politique*, LGDJ, Paris, 1999, pp. 222-223.

² Richard T. SCHAEFER, *Sociology*, cit., p. 90.

³ Pierre BOURDIEU, Jean-Claude PASSERON, *La Reproduction*, Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1970, p. 47.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ Gilles FERREOL (coord.), *Dicționar de sociologie*, Rom. transl. by Lia Decei and Radu Gârmacea, Polirom, Iași, 1998, p. 206.

⁶ Georgeta GHEBREA, *Metamorfoze sociale ale puterii*, Ed. Renaissance, București, 2007, p. 155.

⁷ Philippe BRAUD, *Sociologie politique*, cit., p. 223.

⁸ Pierre BOURDIEU, *Questions de Sociologie*, cit., pp. 134-136.

⁹ Vasile Sebastian DÂNCU, “Socializarea politică...cit.”, p. 51.

¹⁰ Richard T. SCHAEFER, *Sociology*, cit., p. 357.

encountered phenomena in this field, the attachment towards political symbols, myths and heroes and negative feelings towards prospective enemies¹. Among the fundamental mechanisms of political socialisation, we can enumerate learning roles and political vocabulary, values and common attitudes². They determine an acceptance of the current political order, voluntary obedience and complying with the norms. The more an individual acquires knowledge in the political area, the more he is likely to actively participate in political life. Young people gradually acquire information on their country's political system or political behaviour such as voting. Family and school must teach and inculcate notions and concepts so that young people are incline and able to participate in the management of their country. In principle, one can note a correlation between the level of knowledge and the interest in politics shown by young people³.

The process of political socialisation employs the same agencies as the general socialisation process, only with specific means and purposes. Moreover, it also uses specific agencies such as political parties, electoral campaigns or other organizations to inculcate political attitudes and behaviours. We will herewith enter in the details of the political socialisation as it is accomplished by the main agencies.

The Agencies of Socialisation and their Political Role

The school: a tool of the political regime? The primary political socialisation shapes the *habitus* and school education "provides a conceptual and discursive competence"⁴. Moreover, political socialisation begins with the formation of a specific vocabulary. In general, mastering a certain vocabulary is taken as an indicator of political knowledge⁵. The importance and impact of political socialisation also depend on social class and other social factors⁶. The effect of school political socialisation appears to be strongest among those with less knowledge from another source. Among popular social strata, the family is a weaker agency of socialisation, particularly regarding the political field⁷. But:

"Bourdieu recognizes the role of the teaching content and the existence therein of strictly political dimensions. School promotes the formation of patterns of thought explicitly political. They allow the acquisition of the language that appears as the only legitimate mean of political expression, provides the knowledge and recognition of the legitimate political culture"⁸.

To Bourdieu and Passeron, school teaches a "grammar generating political behaviours"⁹. It could thus give rise to different or even opposed political opinions. The two authors call "political violence" the fact that a power imposes some significations

¹ Georgeta GHEBRELA, *Metamorfoze sociale...cit.*, p. 155.

² *Ibidem*.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 158.

⁴ Vasile Sebastian DÂNCU, "Socializarea politică...cit.", pp. 54-55.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 66.

⁶ Annick PERCHERON, *La socialisation politique*, cit., p. 29.

⁷ P.W. MUSGRAVE, *The Sociology of Education*, cit., pp. 272-282.

⁸ Annick PERCHERON, *La socialisation politique*, cit., p. 30.

⁹ Maurice DUVERGER, *Sociologie de la politique...cit.*, p. 142.

as being legitimate still dissimulating the balances of power underlying their domination. Different forms of participation which are similar to the political one, for example voting the student representatives, provide some kind of democratic experience to the pupils that will be useful in the future¹. School education cannot be a sufficient condition for democracy, but it is certainly a necessary condition for its survival. According to A. Percheron, school alone cannot be a sufficient political socialisation agency, but only in conjunction with other different agencies².

One of the requirements of the process of political socialisation comes from the governors. They need to impose some beliefs in order to justify them exerting power and to reinforce the cohesion of the society they manage. The inculcation of those norms and values is necessary for facilitating social compliance with the law. Political socialisation also enables the mobilization of active support for the government and the politicians. A powerful democratic (or non-democratic, for that matter) political culture plays a dissuasive role concerning the desire for a *coup d'État*³. The school stimulates loyalty to the existing political and social order:

"The school plays an important part in teaching attitudes, conceptions and beliefs about the operation of the political system. While it may be argued that the family contributes much to the socialisation that goes into basic loyalty to the country, the school gives content, information and concepts which expand and elaborate these early feelings of attachment"⁴

Unlike the family and peer groups, school is easily susceptible to exert centralized and uniform control. That is why totalitarian societies commonly use educational institutions to indoctrinate the students in certain political beliefs. Even in democracies, where local schools are not under the pervasive control of the national government, political education will generally reflect the norms and values of the prevailing political order⁵. School functions as a conservative socialising agency as it orients children in respecting the established social and political order. Political socialisation can take different forms in different types of societies. In the 1980s, a research showed that the Cuban government encouraged certain types of crowd behaviour to reinforce its legitimacy. Adolescents were mobilized for parades, celebrations, protests and anniversaries of deceased revolutionary leaders. Through these mobilizations, Cuban rulers hoped to convey the political message that Fidel Castro's communist government had and deserved widespread popular support⁶.

Family political socialisation: the most powerful one? Philippe Braud affirms that:

"Political socialisation encompasses the inculcation of both beliefs and representations concerning power (vertical dimension) and membership groups (horizontal dimension)"⁷.

¹ Annick PERCHERON, *La socialisation politique*, cit., p. 150.

² *Ibidem*, p. 151.

³ Philippe BRAUD, *Sociologie politique*, cit., p. 200.

⁴ Frederick ELKIN, Gerald HANDEL, *The Child and Society...*cit., p. 148.

⁵ Richard T. SCHAEFER, *Sociology*, cit., p. 358.

⁶ *Ibidem*

⁷ Philippe BRAUD, *Sociologie politique*, cit., p. 199.

To him, there is no viable political society without interiorizing a minimum of common convictions concerning the legitimacy of the government in power. But what does the political culture represent? It stands for a system of knowledge, ideas, norms and beliefs that permit individuals to understand the role of political activity, their relationship with the governing power and its importance for social cohesion¹. Thus it permits to every individual to place himself in the complex political space and guides his behaviour as citizen, voter, etc. Political culture is a more neutral concept than that of ideology, who engages political beliefs in a precise political context. The political culture bears at the same time a cognitive and an affective dimension². Usually, it is not homogenous and comprehends three aspects: the cognitive one (knowledge about the political field), the affective one (personal attachment towards leaders and institutions) and the evaluative one, since value judgments are formulated concerning the political phenomena³.

The same author believes there are three levels of political socialisation that cumulate. The first one is that of explicit discourses held by socialising agencies with legitimacy. Within the family, the parents can give information on the current political events, put forward their interpretations or make comments. The family is a privileged space for experimenting forms of power, especially given the fact that the affective context is important⁴. We must say that the transmission is not, as it may seem, linear. The process is subject to reject, contestations, discussions etc. Many observers see the family as playing a particularly significant or even the main role in the process. Parents pass on their political attitudes and evaluations to their sons and daughters through discussions at the dinner table and also through the example of their own political involvement or apathy. Early socialisation does not always determine a person's political orientation. Changes occur over time and between generations. Yet research on political socialisation continues to show that parents' views have an important impact on their children's outlook. The political preferences of the parents are frequently transmitted to their children, the identity of those choices being noticed in 50% of the cases. This is true especially if the parents clearly express the political views on which they both agree and explain them to the children. Annick Percheron speaks about the "political history of a family", asserting that a family's political memory plays an important role in determining individual opinions and attitudes⁵.

The second level is represented by the effective behaviour in the political field of the socialising agencies. Sometimes this behaviour can be in contradiction with the discourse held. For instance, the adolescent can discover that there is a difference between what a leader says and what he effectively does. This can deteriorate the process of inculcation and favour anomy⁶. The third level of the political socialisation is that of message production. It is to say that not only the message in itself counts, or its source, but also the way, the context it is produced and what it comes with. More explicitly, a family's home or a school is never neutral. Their position, decorations, furniture transmit a message. The way a political leader holds his speech, what or who he is accompanied with also count in the economy of the inculcation of political

¹ Georgeta GHEBREA, *Metamorfoze sociale...cit.*, p. 142.

² Philippe BRAUD, *Sociologie politique*, cit., pp. 211-213.

³ Maurice DUVERGER, *Sociologie de la politique...cit.*, pp. 122-123.

⁴ Philippe BRAUD, *Sociologie politique*, cit., p. 228.

⁵ Annick PERCHERON, *La socialisation politique*, cit., p. 93.

⁶ Philippe BRAUD, *Sociologie politique*, cit., p. 229.

knowledge to a young individual. Therefore, the coherence between the three levels and the convergence signals between the environments enhances the probability of a correct political socialisation and reproduction of the transmitted political values¹.

More recent studies show that the family efficacy in transmitting political attitudes is limited to only certain kinds of political attitudes that may be the result of specifically family socialisation. These were party preference, an early attachment to country and government and general attitudes towards authority, rules and compliance².

The Resocialisation Process

Occasionally, social changes entail new social positions of individuals and require them to unlearn previous orientations. Resocialisation refers to the process of discarding former behaviour patterns and accepting new ones³. Often, resocialisation occurs when there is an explicit effort to transform an individual, as happens in reform schools, therapy groups, prisons, religious settings and political indoctrination camps⁴. It can however also happen in the case of major social change, as well as at micro social level and in every individual's life. This process typically involves considerable stress for the individual, much more so than socialisation in general or even anticipatory socialisation⁵. Many mechanisms take part in this process, involving the individual and his environment: the socialising agencies, the state, the institutions, the political elite and even international politics. The social and psychological factors play an important role in the outcome of the process. Some people will go through resocialisation more easily while others will encounter more difficulties within the process. These subjective outcomes can be attributed on one hand to the personal experience of every individual. Some people will be too attached to the former system to be able to interiorise the new one or will simply refuse to. On the other hand, it is also possible that the socialising agencies and the environment of an individual are not powerful enough so as to determine a sufficient understanding of the new norms and values, who will therefore not be adopted⁶.

This phenomenon corresponds to a global interpretive frame transformation, as Snow et al. conceptualize it⁷. Frame transformation is a process required when the proposed frames are not or no longer reasoning with the state of society and the participants' opinions and lifestyles. When this happens, new values, new meanings and understandings are required in order to secure the individuals and maintain or collect support. The transformation of global interpretive frames happens when the scope of change is quite radical as in a change of world views, total conversions of thought, or uprooting of all that is familiar (e.g. moving from communism to market capitalism etc.)⁸. It must be said that the resocialisation process is more often not a

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 229

² Robert E. DOWSE, John HUGHES, "The Family, the School...cit.", p. 22.

³ Richard T. SCHAEFER, *Sociology*, cit., p. 88.

⁴ *Ibidem*

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 89.

⁶ *Ibidem*

⁷ David SNOW, "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization and Movement Participation", *American Sociological Review*, vol. 51, no. 4, 1986, pp. 474-475.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 475.

deliberate one, but uses subtle mechanisms which transform little by little, in time, the individual's way of thinking. Sometimes campaigns are carried with the purpose of educating the population in a certain direction. But most often, the process is implicit and long-lasting.

In Romania, the case we are studying, this resocialisation process started after the 1989 Revolution, when the communist regime collapsed.

"The change of the political regime in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 from communism towards democracy produced chaos. The basic conditions: free elections, democracy, market economy, capitalism were somehow met, but not that extent that the transition should take place slowly, without socio-political convulsions."¹

The individuals had to adapt to the new regime:

"A process of political resocialisation of the young generation and the adults accompanied the post communist transition. They had to learn new norms, values and behaviours completely different from those in the communist period." "The first real transformations in the socio-cognitive structure of the socialisation factors referred to the political vocabulary. Such terms as: freedom, authority, violence, tolerance, leadership, democracy are no longer to their old connotations."²

Democracy and market economy were the second values to be interiorised in time³. As already shown, adults has already been submitted to a political socialisation in family as well as in school (especially in school and political organizations which were valued during the communist regime). All this political socialisation proved useless when the communist regime disappeared formally. Many reminiscences were susceptible of being perpetuated while many elements were taught again. The continuity and discontinuity of the political socialisation accomplished before 1989 is what this paper has proposed to experiment.

What is obvious is the fact that it was impossible for the adults to go again through a political socialisation similar to the primary and early secondary ones. They rather had to adapt or acculturate like some sociologists put it⁴ to the new, post-communist political culture.

"A country that has passed from a totalitarian system to a democratic one needs a new political culture, to ensure the differentiation of its functions and structures."⁵

This culture was the result of the regime change, the adapting attempts to a more democratic regime, with democratic institutions and functioning different as

¹ Dan RUSU, "The Political Socialisation of Youth and Children vs. the Political Re-socialisation of the Socialising Factors Complex. A Possible Theoretical Model", University of Oradea, 2003, p. 6. (www.epsnet.org), (consulted on the 23.04.2010).

² *Ibidem*

³ Georgeta GHEBRE, *Metamorfoze sociale...cit.*, p. 158.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 159.

⁵ Dan RUSU, "The Political Socialisation of Youth and Children...cit.", p. 8.

compared to the monolithic communist way of governing¹. This process encompasses the internalization of political vocabulary, party identification, state institutions, understanding the main processes of democracy such as voting behaviour in elections or referendums, the transition process etc. The affective dimension of the resocialisation process is not to be ignored: the individuals had to develop new attitudes, opinions and behaviours towards different elements of the political scene, feelings of attachment or hatred, admiration or hostility, discovery of charismatic leaders etc. During the political transition process, the traditional socialising agencies played an insignificant role in the resocialisation process for adults. Their primary socialisation was long over and in case their families transmitted political values in line with the regime, this could not be undone. Moreover, the school was not an alternative either, as we are talking about adults who had graduated a long time ago from any educational instance. Instead, the effects of the new social and political context contribute to understanding the way the new system functions².

In Romania however, the transition was done by reconverted former political elites:

"First rank nomenklatura was replaced by its second rank and by former members of the secret service; they had a certain administrative experience as well as economic and human capital"³.

"The transition from communism to post communism is a complex and prolonged process, its acceleration being limited by the stress imposed to the population by the reform measures."⁴

Hence transition encompasses intermediary forms between two regimes at social, political and economic levels. In 1995, Romanian sociologist and political scientist Vladimir Pasti affirmed that

"the society we live in today is not a society oriented towards development. Most of its structures and fundamental mechanisms are those of the former socialist society, whose development stopped towards the beginning of the 1980s. The changes that occurred after the revolution altered those mechanisms but did not disband them or determine development. It rather enabled the old structures to reproduce"⁵.

The transition process encompasses resocialisation: each individual's new political socialisation takes place at the same time with the political system's evolution. The population lives the changes and adapts to them. As we have seen, the transition is a difficult process and we could even assert that in Romania, it is not yet finished in spite of the 20 years that have passed and of its integration in the supranational structures. We can deduce that the resocialisation process which comes along is also a delicate one and needs time to be achieved. In the next part, we will study the political socialisation of the parents and the children through an analysis the way the two regimes tackled this matter mainly in school but also generally in the public sphere.

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 7

² *Ibidem*.

³ Georgeta GHEBREA, *Metamorfoze sociale...cit.*, pp. 140-141.

⁴ Vladimir PASTI, *România în tranziție: căderea în viitor*, Nemira, București, 1995, p. 16.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

THE ROMANIAN POLITICAL CULTURE – POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE IN A COMMUNIST AND POST-COMMUNIST COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

A culture can be defined in many ways. Consensually,

"culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values. Culture is to a human collectivity what personality is to an individual"¹.

This concept is therefore fundamental to any human community. The political culture represents the specific political orientations and attitudes towards the political system; the political culture of a society refers to the way the political system was internalized in the knowledge, feelings and evaluations of the population². Gabriel Almond & Sidney Verba conceptualized one of the best known typologies of political cultures. They identify three ideal subtypes: parochial, in which no clear differentiation of specific political roles and expectations exists among actors, i.e. political specialization is minimal; subject, in which institutional and role differentiation exists in political life, but towards which the citizen stand in rather passive relations, and participant, in which the relationships between specialized institutions and citizen opinion and activity are interactive³. This typology does not apply in reality as such, considering that other criteria and combinations will appear. The two authors managed to demonstrate that developing and maintaining a stable democracy depended on a set of political and civic attitudes, of a certain level of political culture of the citizens⁴. Let's then say that political culture influences and is influenced by the individuals. As we have already seen, it plays an important role in the socialisation process and the formation of each member of the society's personality.

"The national political culture is the product of national history, of the relations between the main groups that form part of the nation; it exists in the collective memory and is based on a common language, education in the school system controlled by the nation-state, the automatisms inculcated since childhood."⁵

Hence, it is a dynamic process which occurs and modifies itself in time. Considering this change, it will be interesting to assess the Romanian political culture(s), knowing that this country was submitted to major changes in the last century. In order to remain close to the subject and our academic interest, only some dimensions will be analyzed. First, we will try to understand the changes the Romanian society underwent with the

¹ Geert HOFSTEDE, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-related Values*, Sage Publications, London, 1988, p. 21.

² Gabriel ALMOND, Sydney VERBA, *Cultura civică: atitudini politice și democrație în cinci națiuni*, Rom. transl. by Dan Pavel, Editura Du Style, București, 1996, p. 11.

³ Georgeta GHEBREA, *Metamorfoze sociale...cit.*, pp. 147-148.

⁴ Gabriel ALMOND, Sydney VERBA, *Cultura civică...cit.*, pp. 10-11.

⁵ Georgeta GHEBREA, *Metamorfoze sociale...cit.*, p. 150.

coming in power of the communist regime and more specifically the socialisation and political socialisation it imposed over the population, especially the young generation through school education. We will then rapidly study the way the political realm is reflected today in school education, as well as the interest and involvement young people today in Romania manifest towards politics. This will enable us to understand the way the Romanian political culture evolved as well as the consequences it had over the political socialisation of today's younger generation.

Life and Education during the Communist Regime in Romania

With the arrival in power of the Communists, school education changes significantly in Romania as compared to the previous teachings. The values promoted include the

"education of the New Man, Soviet, with a Bolshevik character, with a Marxist-Leninist conception of the world and with high moral Communist qualities"¹.

We will assess in the following the way Communism was imposed through education in the young generation's mind. Considering that there was no communist political practice in the Romanian society before the late 1940s, when this regime was installed, it is both interesting and important to study the way the communist regime imposed itself through school, in an attempt of gaining the sympathy and partisanship of the young generation in full political socialising process.

In educating the young generation to the new values, the scope of the communists was double: on one hand, the new ideology had to be taught to everybody in the purpose of creating the "new man"; on the other hand, an important finality was that of creating a new elite capable of taking further the communist ideal². In the cultural realm, this imitation of the soviet model meant destroying the values of the national culture and the ideological reconstruction, the reinterpretation of the whole national culture in the context of the Marxist-Leninist ideology³. As soon as August of 1948, new education laws were enacted⁴. They reorganized the whole schooling system following the soviet model. All the schools became laic. The Romanian professorial corpus was purged in order to adapt the public school education to the needs of the Communist ruling Party⁵. The old institutional associations were dissolved and replaced with pro-Communist organizations such as the Union of Working Youth (UTM). In order to limit and undermine the teachers' moral authority and autonomy, the Communist authorities decided to control them also through school children

¹ I.A. PECERNICOVA, *Adolescenții (educația unui adolescent în familie și în școală)*, Rom. transl. by Ludmila Cernasov, Editura de Stat pentru literatură științifică, București, 1952, p. 3.

² Mariana MOMANU, *Educație și ideologie: o analiză pedagogică a sistemului totalitar comunist*, Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Iași, 2005, p. 118.

³ *Ibidem*

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 124.

⁵ Cristian VASILE, *Imposing Control and Mechanisms of Escape: Education in Communist Romania during the Stalinist Period*, "Nicolae Iorga" History Institute, Romanian Academy, București, 2006, p. 215.

organizations using the Soviet model¹. Religious education, very important until then in a Romania where the overwhelming majority of the population was formed of Christian believers, was to be eradicated under the communist regime. A campaign for literacy was launched, assuming significant political and ideological importance after the collectivization and nationalization programmes begun in 1948. It was a part of the so-called Communist Cultural Revolution:

"Through the liquidation of illiteracy, the power intended to eliminate the obstacles which stopped to completely impose the Communist regime and the creation of the new man"².

The limitations concerning the number of teachers able and willing to participate to this campaign that were present at the beginning were rapidly overcome in the next few years. Even if the official statistics were exaggerated, the expansion of the general schooling was obvious³. Moreover the obligatory period of schooling increased within the next years, the teachings being consistently filled with elements of the communist ideology. Not all pupils fell under the communist influence: some of them managed to maintain a distance from the propaganda with the help of their families and some teachers who recommended "decadent" Romanian literature. This way, at least a part of the young generation was protected from being totally subjected to the communist regime. But these attitudes were seldom and never got to develop in an anti-culture opposing the regime: the greatest part of the youngsters received the official education while unable to avoid living the regime propaganda and mentality: the children were an easy prey for the Communist regime. Moreover, to link even further Stalinist Romania to mother USSR, the Russian language became the main foreign language taught in schools in the first 15 or 20 years since the installation of the regime, neglecting international but Western languages such as English or French. Some other disciplines were eliminated or heavily modified: Latin, sociology, psychology, logics, geology, history, even biology or physics underwent structural changes⁴. All the great inventions and scientific innovations were attributed to Russian scientists. History was mutilated so as to exacerbate the Slavic influence in the Romanian culture. Censorship and total isolation from the western cultural world (to which Romania had been especially close in the recent past), now considered as "decadent", dominated the Romanian society in the 1950s. Western press, books, movies, theatre, even music and especially ideas became almost suddenly inaccessible to the until-then rather westernized Romania. Moreover, any liaison with a westerner was to blame and the person could even be accused of conspiracy against the regime. Many intellectuals were persecuted for attitudes favouring western ideas⁵.

Past the Stalinist era, the regime affirms that

"in the view of the Romanian Communist Party, the youth represents tomorrow's change; the youth has the task of ensuring the continuation of the march toward communism" and "the building of the multilaterally developed socialist society"⁶.

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 218.

² *Ibidem*, p. 220.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ Mariana MOMANU, *Educație și ideologie...cit.*, p. 127.

⁵ Adrian NECULAU, *Viața cotidiană în comunism*, Polirom, Iași, 2004, p. 135.

⁶ Ion DUMITRESCU, *Adolescenții. Lumea lor spirituală și activitatea educativă*, Scrisul Românesc, Craiova, 1980, p. 21.

In the Ceaușescu era, the communist teaching system became even more powerful and managed to exert an even better control on the young generation. This can be explained by various factors. One of the most obvious ones is the fact that the regime "turned" almost 20 years since it had been imposed over the population. Hence the Ceaușescu era could already rely upon a base of young people formed in an exclusively communist environment. The number of communist-trained teachers available was far more numerous than it was 15 or 20 years earlier¹. Moreover, the system had already gained experience from the previous period of time. It knew how to react in different situations and what to avoid. After the 1948 law of education, the next step in the fashioning of the communist education system was the "Law regarding education in the Socialist Republic of Romania" enacted in May of 1968. Here, the regime affirmed that the purpose of education is

"to contribute to the blossoming of the socialist nation, the formation of the materialist-dialectic conception about nature and society, [...] the cultivation of love for the country and people, for the ideals of peace and social progress. Romanian education develops in a tight connection with the requirements of constructing socialism and communism"².

The law that expresses most eloquently the relationship of subordination of education to the communist ideology and party policy was the 1978 law. Its introductory part clearly explains the role of school as a vector of transmission of the communist ideology and its contribution to the establishment of the "multilaterally developed socialist society". The central role of the social sciences in accomplishing the political-ideological activity is emphasized in chapter IV of the law, as "every school institution becomes a centre of socialist and communist education of children and youngsters"³. Moreover, the teachers in these fields had the assigned duty of propagating the official ideology and the party policies amongst the children. The three important objectives of education during the Ceaușescu era which were visible in the textbooks since the mere "abecedary" (the manual of the 1st grade) seem today "major personality manipulating strategies with the purpose of assimilating, accepting and perpetuating communism" as a social and political normality⁴. These objectives were disciplining (inculcating fear and obedience), unifying attitudes and beliefs and last but not least, indoctrination having as purposes the political and ideological formation of young people as future cadres of the Party⁵. The regime's philosophy was popularized in the textbooks of virtually all disciplines and unlike in the first years of communism, the teachers in the Ceaușescu era were already trained and very few of them still opposed the regime's view, transmitting dissident ideas to their pupils. Most teachers participated to the regime propaganda not only by teaching the official curriculum without deviance, but also by making personal remarks such as advising youngsters not to go to church on Easter. Hence to a relative relaxation decade followed one of "cultural freezing" starting with 1971. The forced industrialization Romania was

¹ Mariana MOMANU, *Educație și ideologie...cit.*, p. 128.

² *Ibidem*

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 128-129.

⁴ Paul CERNAT, Ion MANOLESCU, Angelo MITCHIEVICI, Ioan STANOMIR, *Explorări în comunismul românesc*, vol. I, Polirom, Iași, 2004, p. 215.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 216.

submitted to under the grandiose aspirations of the regime and of Nicolae Ceaușescu in particular determined the regime to value more the technical departments and generally engineers in various fields¹. This was a constant of the regime that had the tendency to narrow specializations. Social and human sciences were widely disfavoured while all real sciences were promoted². The idea was that while domains such as sociology, psychology, literature or arts were not especially necessary other than for the propaganda, building houses, creating chemical substances and similar activities in those fields were useful to edification of the society.

A fragment of a report of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party concerning school education enables us to better understand the way the communist regime conceived the education of children, adolescents and young people:

"In our view, socialist education, socialist conscience implies at the same time a good knowledge of what is valuable in the cultural, scientific and technical contemporary fields, a good mastering of one's profession, as well as acknowledging the philosophical conception of our party regarding the world and the society – the historical and dialectical materialism – aiming at the formation of a correct citizen attitude. To those requirements must respond today the entire educational work unfolded by our party and our state. In the whole political-educational activity of conscience formation, we must part from the materialist dialectic revolutionary conception of life and the world, from the principles of scientific socialism [...] Only by interiorizing this knowledge can we reach the formation of the man of the socialist and communist society, multilaterally developed, with a high culture, capable of understanding the events and acting according to the requirements of the laws of societal development"³.

The 1970s were also marked by a fake enthusiasm submitted to the personality cult of the dictator. The communist leaders' portraits appeared in public places everywhere since the installation of the regime. Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's was shown along with Ana Pauker's until 1952; Marx, Lenin and Stalin were praised with the occasion of manifestations such as the 7th of November (anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in the USSR), the 23rd of August or the 1st of May (Workers' Day). With the coming in power of Nicolae Ceaușescu however, the cult of personality slowly became overwhelming: his pictures were in every classroom, every room of every public institution and even in bookstores. Children were taught from a young age to express towards the dictator a love similar to that towards their father and thankfulness for what he provides them. This major feature of the regime was exacerbated in the next decade, the 1980s representing a peak of these manifestations⁴. The extreme practice of the personality cult blocked and redirected the activity of the country in the sense that no decision was taken anymore in Romania without having the approval of the dictator, his wife or their closest collaborators. Elena Ceaușescu too was the subject of the cult. She was praised as "the model to follow by all the women in the country",

¹ Cristian VASILE, *Imposing Control and Mechanisms of Escape...cit.*, p. 215.

² *Ibidem*.

³ Nicolae CEAUȘESCU, *Educația revoluționară, materialist-științifică – parte integrantă a procesului de formare și dezvoltare a conștiinței socialiste a omului nou, constructor al socialismului și comunismului*, Ed. Politică, București, 1985, pp. 46-47.

⁴ Anneli Ute GABANYI, *Cultul lui Ceaușescu*, Polirom, Iași, 2003, p. 81.

"the legendary mother of the childhood stories" and "the best and fairest woman on Earth". She was presented by the press as a

"complex personality, which combines the qualities of a scientific researcher and a political leader, with an indisputable influence in the Romanian political life"¹.

Her meteoric career was remarkable: she was recognized as the country's best chemical scientist and was frequently entitled "Academician Doctor Engineer Elena Ceaușescu". Actually, she had no real knowledge in the field, but was imposed as such in order to glorify her merits and create an aura of perfection in the eyes of the population².

Propaganda marked all social realms and those educational in particular, be they literary, artistic, scientific or other. The Party was everywhere. All cultural manifestations were organized and directed by the Party in the scope of spreading the ideology and the attachment towards the regime. Children were part of the manifestations organized with the occasion of celebrations such as the 23rd of August (the Romanian national celebration which marked the fall of the country in the Soviet sphere of influence towards the end of the Second World War). Starting from kindergarten, children were enrolled in the Șoimii Patriei ("falcons of the country"); in school they became Pioneers, to reach in high school and college the Union of the Communist Youth³. All those organizations controlled by the party framed the children's free time activities and oriented them towards an ideological path. This was part of a secondary socialisation that in the Romanian Communist regime appeared as a primary one, completing the role insufficiently accomplished by the family. Moreover, from those organizations were recruited the best students in order to use them as informers and later on security officers. In the early stages, they gave information about teachers, friends and even sometimes family. Then they could have been promoted. This is how the Securitate penetrated even the youth, instilling the sentiment of fear: anybody could have turned you in.

The communist conception about moral behaviour can only be understood in the context of the ideology. Moral values were subdued to the ideal of constructing the communist society and anything that could contradict them is qualified from the start as being immoral and undesirable. The adhesion to the new system of moral values represented a *sine qua non* condition of becoming the new man the society aimed for. This required first and foremost a clean up from all the old bourgeois values. Moral education had an explicit role in communism: that of explaining and educating children so as to assure their conformation to the values and norms that must guide their life⁴. Complying with the communist precepts equalled being a patriot: only by doing so, the pupil served his country and the ideals of greatness that he must participate to. Collective identity meant everything. To the communist way of thinking, individual development and free way of thinking had to be limited if not completely removed. Any individual represented an element of the system, a comrade worthy of being used in the construction of the society. The total dependence

¹ *Ibidem*.

² *Ibidem*, p. 83.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ Mariana MOMANU, *Educație și ideologie...cit.*, pp. 145-146.

of the individual on the collective will is the distinctive sign of the communist ethic¹. The latter is reduced to merely two great values: the utility for the organization (the society, the cause of communism), and the fidelity towards the party and the dictator. Therefore individual accomplishment had to be sacrificed on the altar the communist edifice. The hatred towards the religion was also a constant of the communist system in Romania. It was considered that believing in God undermined the belief in the communist supreme good. Without any self confidence or faith in God, the only thing remaining for the individual was to believe in the unlimited power of the party². Communism thus substitutes itself to religion, aiming to give an answer to all problems as well as comfort, just as Christian religion does with the believers.

Another characteristic of the communist regime was a specific language employed by the activists that was soon to be reproduced in the school textbooks and in the conversations: the so-called *wooden language*. The propaganda recurrently employed some expressions and concepts to be deeply rooted in people's minds. Besides the "creation of the multilaterally developed socialist society", the use of the plural "us" (the communists or the party) and "them" (the imperialists) opposition is probably one of most well known³. Also, bellicose terms were often used to express the violent reaction to any opposition: "fighting against the imperialists", "liquidating the enemy", "the struggle against the bourgeois-capitalist forces", all these expressions were omnipresent in all discourses and aimed to be imprinted in children's and why not adults' minds⁴. Also, the universal formula of addressing was "comrade" in the detriment of "mister" or "misses".

In the context of the communist moral, women had a distinct place in society. The regime proclaimed the equality of sexes. Thus women were supposed to actively participate to the accomplishment of the regime's goals just like men, through their work and devotion. But at the same time, the political discourse attributes to the woman the vital role of motherhood and raising children in the "good communist spirit":

"As mothers and educators, women have an essential role in forming and educating the young offspring of the country. They must be devoted to rising the new generations in the spirit of patriotism and wanting to dedicate their entire life to the aspiration of contributing to the flourishing ideals of the communist and socialist society"⁵.

The family had, at least at a declarative level, a leading role in the communist society. School, families, children, youth and women's organizations and cultural institutions were supposed to emphasize the importance of "family as the basic cell of society". Family socialisation was utterly important in transmitting the moral values of the regime. It was supposed to work together with school and youth organizations in order to inculcate to the young members of the society a way of thinking in harmony with the regime's ideals and aspirations. Basically, family socialisation in the spirit

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 148.

² *Ibidem*, p. 149.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ *Ibidem.*, pp. 164-165.

⁵ Elisabeta STĂNCIULESCU, *Sociologia educației familiale*, vol. II, Polirom, Iași, 1998, pp. 147-148.

of the regime was seen as a social obligation and the responsibility of each parent (especially mothers) towards the society¹.

The aim of creating a new society and implicitly a "new man" remained constant all throughout the communist years in Romania. The regime which lasted almost 50 years profoundly marked the Romanian society in all its dimensions. Through its extension in time and its involvement in people's lives, communism determined a complete change in the mentalities of several generations. People had to adapt in any way they could to the oppression of the regime and this contributed heavily to the creation of a subculture (sometimes a counterculture) within the communist regime. This culture has possibly perpetuated in time. When the Romanian Revolution outburst in December 1989, the youth and the active population was completely unaware of how a non-communist society functioned. The elder generation who had lived the pre-communist era was greatly outnumbered by the younger one and it was impossible for it to get involved significantly in the public life so as to make a difference.

The fall of the communist regime led to a dramatic change in the Romanian society, who took the path of a difficult transition towards democracy. Evidently, many reforms were undertaken in the Romanian education system at all levels. It would be interesting to present shortly the post-communist Romanian educational system, so as to have a broader view of the political socialisation possibilities both during the communist era and after its collapse.

School Political Socialisation in Romania after 1989

In the next part, we will analyze the educational system in present-day Romania and more precisely the way political sciences are taught and presented to children and adolescents in school. The aim of this analysis is double: on the one hand, this enables a comparison with the parents' political socialisation presented earlier. On the other hand, it allows us to assess the stage of political socialisation of an adolescent resulting from his or her school education.

Similarly with the beginnings of communism in the late 1940s, the school system in the early 1990s was confronted with the fact that the teachers available had to adapt as they went along with the new social and political situation. Their background, formation and even their way of thinking was and could not (yet) be in line with the democratic expectations. The resocialisation, as already stated, is a long-lasting process. Moreover, we can state that in Romania, this process has not yet finished. Numerous changes occurred in the school system since 1990, which has been restructured many times, the results still not being very satisfactory if we look at the public opinion concerning this subject. Although efforts have been made after the integration of Romania in the EU in 2007, the educational system in Romania is still regarded as being "inefficient"² and non-competitive, but also irrelevant in its capacities to train individuals who will face the challenges of a democracy and a market economy³. Also, the infrastructure and facilities are of low quality. In many

¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 156-157.

² Administrația Prezidențială, *România educației, România cercetării: raportul comisiei prezidențiale pentru analiza și elaborarea politicilor din domeniile educației și cercetării, Pactul național pentru educație*, Imprimeria Națională, București, 2009, p. 6.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

schools, Internet and computers are not available¹. Also, the teachers' age average is of 42 as of 2007 and is ageing². A simple calculus shows that they were about 25 in 1989, which makes them already educated and trained during the communist regime, hence needing to adapt and resocialise in post-communism. Moreover, less than 20% of those teachers attended continuous training and 1.6% lifelong learning after entering the system³. According to the official studies, it seems therefore that the current educational system had and still has difficulties in adapting to the new environment even 20 years after the fall of the communist regime. An obvious obstacle to any development is the fact that numerous reforms were launched, almost none being coherent with the previous one or being taken to term. This determined a fragmentation of the system and a chaos in schools, where teachers and pupils have to adapt every year to the changes. Moreover, Romania has today the shortest school year in the EU and the lowest number of teaching classes⁴. The National Pact for Education aims at establishing a period of 5 years to bring remedy to at least some if not all the problems enounced. The curriculum is also to be modified: the present day curriculum in Romanian school education is overloaded⁵ on one hand and lacking important information on the other. But to my mind, one of the most important domains that have been put aside is the political one. In this pact, there is no specification of the political sciences teaching. A quick review of the official curriculum and the textbooks in the assignments that contain political elements may bring a solid argument to the fact that political sciences, in spite of their importance in a democratic society, are widely undertreated in Romanian schools today⁶. Moreover, it would also be interesting to see how communism is presented today in school.

The curriculum does not provide in principle compulsory education in political science as a separate discipline. However, many socio-human assignments also introduce concepts from this field. Moreover, each school has a degree of autonomy, being able to offer optional courses in different fields⁷. Concerning the compulsory courses, some of them give to the teacher the possibility to address more or less theoretical concepts and phenomena linked to the political sciences. The Romanian Language and Literature discipline presents briefly in the 12th grade "the influence of communism in post-war literature"⁸. Also, the textbooks bear numerous references to the Romanian people, its historical, cultural and linguistic origins. Political and economic geography is taught in the 10th and 11th grades, in order to familiarize the youngsters with the present day setup of the world, the migrations and exchanges of individuals, goods and services⁹. Globalization, supranational structures, levels of development and the place of Romania the world geopolitical organization are

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

² *Ibidem*.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

⁶ From the conclusions of a study conducted previously on the contribution of school to the political socialisation of adolescents in France and Romania.

⁷ <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/c557> (consulted on the 30.03.2010).

⁸ <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/8516> (consulted on the 30.03.2010).

⁹ Official curriculum for Geography, 10th grade <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/6239> (consulted on the 30.03.2010); Official curriculum for geography, 11th grade <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/6391> (consulted on the 30.03.2010).

important topics which enable students to understand the current problems of the contemporary world in a comprehensive manner and become informed of the changes that occur on the international scene. Also, the foreign languages textbooks introduce the political systems of the respective countries (the US, Great Britain, France, Spain, etc.)¹. This opening towards the West was inexistent until 1989, the communist regime qualifying as "imperialist" or even diabolic any norm or value coming from these countries, of which Romania aspires today to be part. History is the discipline from which emerges most of the knowledge of the youngsters concerning politics of the past and of the present, in Romania and elsewhere. The curriculum encompasses notions related to the evolution of peoples, states and societies. Among the values and attitudes this discipline aims to inculcate, we can note "ethnic, religious and cultural tolerance"². In the two last grades, "state and politics" or "international relations" are chapters which deal directly with the political realm and address problems particularly of national and international politics such as parties and political systems, the Cold War and European integration³. Romania aligned its curricula to the community standards and introduced notions related to the European Union, its history, institutions and functioning. Furthermore, a few assignments such as Economy, Sociology or Philosophy, taught only to the pupils enrolled in the Social Sciences section of the Human department in the theoretical high schools, also contribute to some extent to the youngsters' political formation. In the curriculum of the Economy class, market economy is compared to the communist planned economy. Also, the Romanian integration in the EU is studied, along with the globalization phenomenon, again, from an economic perspective⁴. In Sociology, the pupils face for the first time the definition of political sociology and theorists such as Max Weber or Karl Marx. This discipline also provides a brief presentation of social and political institutions, political systems, but also the dynamics of globalization, political and territorial expansion and notions of international relations. The expansion of capitalism is illustrated by the example of the EU and NATO⁵. The European political developments are approached mostly through a transcurricular method, with the contribution of other disciplines with specific content⁶. These explanations are rather brief and cannot result in a comprehensive overview of the main political sciences notions. Furthermore, civic education is optional, just as "politology", human rights or European dimension⁷. This, along with the fact that often there are little available teachers specialized in those domains, makes them widely understudied in Romanian schools, as opposed to other countries where political sciences is a compulsory assignment in high school.

¹ Andrew WALKLEY, Hugh DELLAR, *Innovations, A Course in Natural English*, Thomson, London, 2007, pp. 48-51.

² Official curriculum for History, 9th grade <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/6236> (consulted on the 30.03.2010).

³ Alexandru BARNEA (coord.), *Istorie, Manual pentru clasa a XII-a*, Ed. Corint, București, 2007, p. 128.

⁴ Official curriculum for Economy, 11th grade <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/6390> (consulted on the 30.03.2010).

⁵ Official curriculum of Sociology, 11th grade <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/6389> (consulted on the 30.03.2010).

⁶ Roxana TUDORICĂ, *Dimensiunea europeană a învățământului românesc*, Institutul European, Iași, 2004, p. 59.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 59.

We can draw a few conclusions from this quick overview of the extent to which political sciences are provided in the Romanian curricula. First, we must acknowledge the fact that notions which seem to be linked with political sciences are indeed inscribed in the curricula and taught in schools. They encompass international politics, supranational organizations and a general presentation of the political systems. Still, an exclusively political education does not exist in the Romanian teaching system, which would contribute to the creation of a political culture among young people through on the one hand the knowledge of notions and concepts, but also through the hidden curriculum, which plays an important part in the political socialisation process. The courses which present these notions do it from the perspective of a particular domain of research (economy, history, literature, etc). This represents a so to say biased view of political sciences. There is no conceptual analysis of the main political phenomena, no genuine presentation of, for instance, the democratic system and its specific institutions. In the Romanian recent historical context, where communism contributed in erasing many of the previous attitudes and moreover, ignoring any other political system, teaching the basic concepts related to the way a state and especially a democracy functions would be in my opinion an important step in the political socialisation and resocialisation of young people today. No current reform program in education provides this kind of education at the pre-university level.

A study¹ aimed at assessing the problematic question of the interest proven by young Romanian people towards politics is very relevant in this direction. Approximately 35 students from different faculties participated to the focus groups. The results were that the tendency is for them to prove a moderate interest towards politics, just to "know what happens"². The majority does not invest time or effort in any political activity, while others claim becoming interested only in special occasions such as electoral campaigns. The students who seem most interested in politics are those coming from faculties of profile and/or who are already involved in political activities. However, even they state that they are more interested in international politics, international relations or plain theory, because of the fact that the internal political scene is dominated by "amateurs", "scandals" and "nepotism"³. They are very critical concerning the politicians, which are in their opinion manipulators, corrupt, unprepared, turned towards their own interests etc.⁴. Also, young people are reluctant in publicly expressing their opinions in what concerns politics, which makes this kind of discussions very seldom⁵. Hence the vast majority does not manifest any interest in getting actively involved in the public life or following a political career. Those who manifest a slight interest in this direction affirm preferring to perform "backstage" as consultants, managers etc, or only as members of the civil society (volunteers, members of NGOs, etc.)⁶. We can deduce from all this an acute lack of confidence in the national political sphere the young people prove. It must be kept in mind that having young people interested and actively involved in the political realm is an important condition of a democracy's good functioning.

¹ MEDNET and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, *Implicarea tinerilor în viața politică*, study conducted in nov. 2009, p. 1.

² *Ibidem*, p. 4.

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 4-5.

⁴ *Ibidem.*, p. 5.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 6-7.

Assessing the interest of the French adolescents towards the political field, could be interesting because of the traditional French democratic political culture. France is an example of country which bears a democratic tradition and the fact that this exists for several generations could contribute to confirming the hypothesis of the reproduction of similar attitudes, opinions and behaviours towards the political field from one generation to another. The interest for politics can be seen at all levels, starting from the opinions exposed by most of the population, to the involvement in the political life, the interest proven towards it at home, at work and in schools. When studying the French younger generation, we can observe the fact that it is way more developed than the same variable in the Romanian case¹. Young people in Romania affirm not being well-informed in what concerns politics² (we can deduce from here that school does not offer a sufficient formation in this sense), but at the same time they are not interested in bringing it remedy one way or another, having other priorities or considering themselves too young for this³. Considering all this, several intriguing questions appear: why is the situation such in Romania? What determines it? Which socialisation agency contributes the most to the political socialisation of young people? It seems that school isn't it, is it then the parental agency? What determines the fact that young people today seem to associate politics with negative experiences? Could this be a result of the specific Romanian political culture and its communist inheritance? Of the fact that the parents have been insufficiently resocialised in the democratic regime hence not capable to transmit to their children an interest for politics? This study attempts to offer an answer to the last questions and evaluate the situation with the help of semi-structured interviews conducted with parents and their children.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: ANALYZING THE INTERVIEWS

In order to confirm the thesis of this analysis some 38 interviews were conducted with parents and their children. These interviews had multiple explicit aims: revealing the interest proven in politics by the both generations, their attitudes and opinions concerning the communist regime and its characteristics, the opinions concerning the current Romanian political life. The implicit objectives of the interviews were to assess the political socialisation of the parents, the role of the family in the political socialisation of the children, but also the degree in which the two generations seem to share the same opinions, attitudes and behaviours regarding the political field and thus answer to the question until what point the parents' generation's (political) socialisation might have had an impact on the younger generation's political socialisation.

A question guide made on the basis of theoretical elements, as well as previous studies, personal observation and intuition served to give a direction to the interviews. They were conducted face to face as well as by telephone and have been usually taped in order to have the possibility of recalling the reactions the respondents had to a specific question. The respondents have been informed that their answers remained anonymous, that they had to specify only their age, education level and profession

¹ From the conclusions of a study conducted previously on the contribution of school to the political socialisation of adolescents in France and Romania.

² MEDNET and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, *Implicarea tinerilor...cit.*, p. 8.

³ *Ibidem*.

and that they could choose not to answer to a certain question. The limits of this study consist in the fact that some of the answers of the individuals who were interviewed were not detailed enough as to permit us to form more than a superficial impression of their political socialisation and political attitudes. Moreover, the sample is not a very numerous one, although it allows us to have an idea of the influence the parents have on their children and the first generation's socialisation has on the second. Still, some respondents were not capable of giving examples or characterizing certain elements, so this remains a failure of the procedure. 2 couples of interviews will not be used in this study, as the answers given were very scarce, incomplete and therefore irrelevant.

The sample was taken in order to be heterogeneous and incorporate as much as possible different educational backgrounds and professions of the parents. This would allow the study to make a distinction, if necessary, between these attitudes and attempt to offer an explanation regarding this dimension. Before trying to give an answer to the hypothesis with the help of the interviews, we should first take a look at the general pattern of attitude which is revealed by the interviews.

General Observations

As a general observation, a small majority of the subjects affirm having very little or no interest at all in politics. On a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, among the children, only 6 of them declare an interest equal or higher than 3. 3 of those 6 children graduated from a political sciences college, which could explain their higher interest. Among the parents, 5 of them affirm an interest equal or higher than 3. They correspond to the children who declared to be rather or very interested in the political field. This could be a first indicator of the fact that, with one exception, the parents' interest for politics was transmitted to the children. If we take into consideration the fact that the parents whose children followed a political formation say having an interest of 4 or 5, we could say the interest proven by the parent contributed to the political socialisation of the child in such a way that it determined him to follow a degree in this domain. Moreover, this can be confirmed by the fact that most children say that the parents, along with the media, are their main sources of information concerning politics. The exceptions are, surprisingly or not, the children who affirm to be very interested in politics just like their parents. We could however explain the fact that they seem not to place the parents as an important information source because both generations tend to search for more detailed and why not more objective information in order for them to form an opinion. The children whose interest is of 1 or 2 only rely on their parents to get informed concerning politics, not being motivated enough to go more into detail.

At the question "how often do you debate political matters", most of the respondents said that they debated rarely, as in a few times a year or once a month at most. Those more interested in politics said that they debated at least a few times a month, some even daily. One parent interested in politics said they were debating politics rarely. Usually, most parents which are less interested in politics debate only important events such as crisis, scandals or main political events, sometimes decisions concerning the field(s) they are interested in (or more precisely work in) such as economy, medicine, education, etc. The children seem to debate a little more politics, but usually not more than once or a few times a month. The majority of the children

also affirm that they carry discussions with their parents, along with the school-mates or co-workers. It is the family that holds the first place in what regards the exchange of political opinions or attitudes, even for the oldest of the children, even though the parents are a central source of information and discussion for all the teenagers. The latter do not seem to attach much importance to school as an agency of political socialisation. Besides the ones having graduated from a political science department, the rest say that they learned very little or nothing linked to politics in school. Even the informal discussions with the teachers and/or the classmates were or are scarce.

What it can be said is that in majority, the children and the parents share similar or sometimes almost identical opinions and attitudes regarding communism, which might be another element which could confirm the importance of the family political socialisation. This importance can be shown by the fact that there seem to be a certain reproduction of attitudes and opinions of the parents and children concerning communism. Knowing that school seems to have little role in the political socialisation and even less in the formation of subjective opinions, knowing the attitude of the parent, the importance of the discussions between the two and the fact that the child could not have created his or her own attitudes by experience, we could be entitled to conclude that at least on this topic, the family agency played a very important role in the political socialisation of the children.

Politics today is regarded negatively by most respondents. They seem to have very little confidence in politicians and political parties. They characterize them by pejorative adjectives and believe Romania is heading in a wrong direction. For the attitudes of the respondents concerning this sphere, again, we can find similarities between the two generations, although the pattern is not followed as closely as for the opinions about the communist regime. In general, the parents and the children prove having similar opinions regarding the political scene. In some cases, the opinions are divergent and we will present, analyze and attempt to give an explanation for this in the next parts of the study.

The Respondents and their Connection with Politics

One of the first elements to be assessed in this study is very important in order to have a first impression over the respondents' attitude towards politics in general. It allows an understanding by the analyst of the place where the respondent sees himself as being situated with respect to politics. Then, it will be interesting to see if the evaluation is confirmed by the latter responses. The first question asked the respondent to put himself on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being the least and 5 being the most in order to assess his or her interest for the political field. The number 2 received the most answers (11 occurrences), followed by 1 and 3, both gathering 7 answers. Only 4 people evaluated their interest in politics at number 4 and 5 of them at number 5. In general, these answers are rather equally disposed between children and parents. Concerning the answer to this question, what is also interesting to observe is the fact that there are little differences between the answers of the parents and their children: most of them give the same scale number, while in some cases the difference is of one point. Only in 2 cases there is a difference of two points in favour of the parent. We can conclude from here that generally, the political field does not seem extremely appealing to many of the respondents. The fact that many of them give the number

two as an answer can be explained by the fact that politics concerns everybody in its role of regulating the country and that it is impossible not to be involved one way or another as it is affecting many realms of everyday professional and sometimes personal life. Also, we must take into consideration the possibility for some respondents to have given "prestige" answers, meaning that they could have thought that giving the number 1 would be shameful and opted for a less radical answer.

The next questions addressed to the respondents aimed at finding out how their interest in politics is expressed, namely what are their sources of information, what kind of political information are they interested in, if they debate political matters and how often. The main information source of the children seems to be the media in all its forms: the press, TV, radio, but also online papers or blogs. In 14 cases, the media was indicated as the main information source by the children. Most of the respondents said they listened to the radio or watched TV when a political event was broadcast. The second information source was interestingly enough the family, more specifically the parents (in 12 cases). The workplace, school, friends, schoolmates or co-workers (peers), neighbours, other siblings, other people were far less indicated as information sources by the children. We can conclude that the media, by its purpose of informing the population, is the vehicle preferred by most youngsters in order to obtain information about politics. It is an easily usable method, as it only implies passive listening or reading. The possibility of reaction is very limited besides in the case of the online forms of media (only indicated by 6 respondents).

The parents are therefore an important source of mere information concerning politics for their children who are not young enough to be still considered in full primary socialisation process. The effect of this situation is that the parents are susceptible of heavily transmitting their attitudes, behaviours and opinions to their children, whose only socialisation instance which could balance this being the media, with all its limits and a socialising agency. This lets the school agency far behind the parental agency in what concerns political socialisation of the children. Moreover, when asked what did they remember learning in school (pre-university) concerning politics, some of the respondents believe they have learnt nothing, while others note scattered elements such as "the revolution", "political parties", "justice and equality", "the two World Wars", "the Romanian Constitution", usually invoking the history class (with 3 occurrences of the civic education classes and 1 of the economy class). Generally, the members of the young generation feel they have learnt very little political notions in school and even the hidden curricula does not seem to have played a significant role for these respondents. This situation, coupled with the fact that the children affirm that their parents are an important information source for political aspects, allows us to conclude that the parental agency of political socialisation seems nowadays in Romania to be superior to the school agency. As already mentioned in the previous part when assessing the general tendency of the answers, the children who do not invoke the parental agency are usually those who followed a degree in political sciences, who work in a connected field or in general those who simply seem more interested in politics than their parents do. There are however only 2 cases corresponding to the latter situation, one corresponding with the respondent who joined a youth political organization. To conclude, the parents seem to be an important political socialisation agency and this can be confirmed by the answers given by the children to the question "with whom do you carry political discussions most often?".

We must mention the fact that before asking this question, the respondents (both parents and children) were asked if they used to carry on discussions on political matters and if so, how often and concerning what elements. Concerning the frequency of those discussions, we can note the fact that most respondents say they carry this kind of discussions only a few times a year, with the occasion of important events such as elections, crisis, scandals etc. (8 occurrences for the children, 6 for the parents). A relevant number of people also say they speak about politics a few times a month. A very small percentage talks politics weekly or daily. Most children, even those who affirm not carrying such discussions with their parents too often, when asked what when was their most recent discussion concerning politics with their parents and what was it about responded that they had debated the most recent governmental decisions concerning the salary cuts ("I think the last discussion we had was about the reduction of the salaries in the public sector because of the economic crisis" – C.C., 23, F, journalist).

What is interesting is the fact that although some parents state they are rather interested or very interested in politics, they seem to keep their opinions and comments to themselves, as they state that they do not discuss politics too often. One respondent, who evaluated his interest in politics at 5, says he only speaks about politics maybe once a month because he fears not having the same opinions with his friends, neighbours or co-workers could lead to a "useless conflict" which he would rather avoid. It is also the case of other respondents and we could explain this attitude by the fact that reminiscences from the past regime when it was impossible to freely express one's political opinions without this having potentially negative consequences, are still manifested today. However, 12 parents stated they carried political talks with close family members, while 14 children stated they talked with their parents and close relatives, which shows that although maybe rare, the discussions between parents and children on political matters take place more often than with other people such as co-workers or schoolmates, teachers (for the children) friends, neighbours etc. Only one child indicated that they carried discussions on political matters with the teachers, while 5 indicated the schoolmates and 4, their friends. Hence the parental agency seems to be confirmed for the children as being an important vehicle of information but also exchange of opinions and attitudes towards politics. Most respondents are interested in the decisions concerning their own field of interest (be it economic, financial, educational, health etc., especially concerning new legislation in these domains), but almost no respondent stated that they were interested in political decisions concerning various domains even if not theirs (only 3 parents stated this and 3 children; 2 of the parents and the children corresponded, both of the children being students or graduates of a political science department). This shows that the interest proven by the respondents towards politics is limited strictly to the decisions affecting them. Almost all respondents invoked as an example the economic decisions recently taken by the government concerning the salary cuts as a consequence of the crisis and the negotiations with the IMF. The political field hence seems rather remote to most people, who do not feel they should be involved or even informed about anything more than what is touching them directly. This remoteness of the respondents can be explained by on the one hand the consequences of the intrusion of the communist regime in the lives of the population before 1989 determining the negative perception of the parents concerning the political field, which they might have transmitted to their children, along with the impression that "nothing can be done anymore".

This betrays a loss of hope and a profound disappointment the population feels in present times towards politics and politicians. This could represent a communist reminiscence, the belief that all politicians are "bad" from the start, that politics is anyway not worth it.

It must be said that two questions included asking the subjects of the study if they were part at some point or if they form today part of any political organization and why. The question did not receive too many positive answers or answers at all. The parents limited themselves at affirming that they did not form part of any kind of organization and that they would not be interested in forming part in any, without wanting or being capable of explaining their choice. Some respondents only believed "it was not for [them]" (V.I., 43, F, hospital attendant) or that they "did not want to have responsibilities" (D.T., 58, F, retired, ex-inspector). Others said they formed part of a trade union, but that they did not feel it was relevant for affirming their membership in a political organization, as they played practically no role in this trade union and did not feel too integrated or represented by it (C.D., 52, F, accountant). Even the parents who affirmed their interest was of 4 or 5 totally rejected the possibility of forming part of a party or even a different kind of political association : "I do not feel represented up until now by the public reaction of any of the political organizations or NGOs in Romania" (M.P., 62, M., research engineer). This attitude could show on the one hand the distrust for all the Romanian political organizations, but it could also represent a consequence of the way ordinary people were forcefully involved in politics during the communist period. The fact that before 1989, people had to participate not only in all the façade elections, but also in different kinds of street manifestations, and the way the communist regime became an intruder even in the most intimate elements of one's personal life might have triggered a fear or a repulsion for any kind of membership in a political organization nowadays.

As for the children, a few of them formed part at some point of the youth organization of a party or participated to an electoral campaign. S.C., 23, F, translator, said she had joined the youth organization of 5th department of the Liberal Party in 2008 in order to "better understand the political environment". She believes that after this experience, she "understood that everything that is decided inside a party is in the interest of its members, not of the citizens". She dropped out of the organization because she believed "she had no benefit and everything consisted of behind the curtains games and the support for party members in campaigns more or less useful for the citizens". This shows that even if she had the availability to participate actively in the political life, she seemed to be disappointed at the end, being discouraged to try again the experience. Her parent (N.C., 54, M, electrician) said he was not a member but rather a sympathiser of a political formation and that he had avoided joining it in order not to "complicate himself". He also excludes a membership "at this moment", which means that he does not completely rule out a membership in the future. Another respondent (I.E., 23, M, master student) has been the counsellor of a deputy and thought it was an interesting experience which he would repeat. He was also a member of the youth organization of a party, which he dropped when changing cities and starting college (lack of time and availability). The rest of the children affirmed that for the moment they were not interested in joining a political organization, maybe envisaging this in the distant future, or that they were not at all interested in joining a political organization because:

"It's not my thing and I do not like the system today because the politicians do not really take into consideration the population's grievances, but rather they want power, winning as much money as possible and having a top position" (A.R., 22, F, research assistant).

We can therefore observe the fact that some of the children seem more open to political experiences than their parents. This could be a result of the fact that their political socialisation was made in a different environment than that of the parent and that they seem to bare less prejudice concerning this possibility of joining an organization themselves. However, the fact that the majority of the children ruled out this possibility at this point could prove an influence of the parents, who are obviously refractory to this, over their political views and attitudes.

Furthermore, it is interesting to assess people's attitudes towards voting. As the main part of the respondents excluded the possibility of forming part of a political organization, hence actively participating in the political life, the only other manner in which they could express themselves that is left would be the vote. We will see in the following that the appreciations of the respondents concerning the political field are not generally very positive. Voting could be the one way the individuals have to sanction this discontent. This is why this question and the evaluation of the voting behaviour, but also of the importance of the vote are interesting for our study. Before analyzing the results, we must mention the fact that the vote was mandatory during the communist regime, although it was arranged and all the candidates formed part of the only existing party. This could hamper the importance of the vote in the eyes of the parents, who saw it up until 1989 just as an obligation and an imposition of the regime, not as a true mean of expressing an option and a potential way of changing something in the country. When asked if they went voting to the last elections, most of the parents responded they did, with 6 of them saying they didn't. Those who did not vote motivated this by the fact that they did not believe in any of the candidates or by a general disappointment in the political class, which made them renounce completely to the vote: "I did not participate because I did not think I had any real option to choose from" (C.T., 49, F, actress). The respondents who went voting justified this by the "hope of changing something" (Z.I., 55, F, economist) or the "hope that people's living standards would improve" (M.S., 40, F, registered nurse). However, some respondents affirmed that they went voting just because "they felt it was their responsibility to do so" (M.L.V., 45, F, licensed nurse) or because "they wanted to exert their right" (A.C., 49, M, engineer). All parents unanimously affirmed however that voting was important or very important, although some of them did not participate regularly to the elections. When asked why they thought voting was important, many parents answered that they thought it was the only way they had of expressing their opinion or trying to change something: "It represents the possibility to contribute to the good functioning of politics, economy etc." (M.L.V., 45, F, licensed nurse). Others said that if one didn't go voting, he would lose the possibility to complain about the decisions which are taken on the political scene: "You don't vote, you don't count, you don't comment!" (N.C., 54, M, electrician). However, some add that in order for one's vote to count, you have to "first get informed and know who to vote with, otherwise you might as well not go at all if only to vote without being informed" (M.E., 52, F, laboratory assistant).

The children's attitudes towards voting are slightly different than their parents. Almost half of the ones having the legal age to vote didn't go voting to the last

elections while only $\frac{3}{4}$ of them believe voting is important. Some believe that voting is "useless because the winner will anyway not do anything for the country" (D.I., 20, F, undergraduate student) or that "voting is important if the politicians want it to be; otherwise they can just ignore it" (S.T., 23, M, journalist). This shows that the parents' voting discipline has not always been transmitted to their children. Again, their discipline could be on the one hand the result of the communist reminiscences, but also on the other hand the consequence of their permanent hope and search for the better in post-communism. The lack of the feeling of responsibility towards voting could also be a deficiency of school education, who did not manage to inculcate the necessary information and the attitudes towards voting to the youngsters. This is a worrisome conclusion, as even some of the most interested in politics respondents (among which two political science graduates) did not attend the elections. Another element which is remarkable is the fact that both parents and children almost unanimously affirm they have no political orientation whatsoever, but vote and put their confidence in a political party or formation following the circumstances and the situation. Only 2 parents admitted having a particular sympathy for a political party, with one of the corresponding children sharing the same opinion and one not. This shows that the Romanian political scene does not seem trustworthy enough in general to the respondents and it also proves that its instability disconcerts the population and discourages them from expressing their opinion. Seeing the way the situation prefigures, it would be interesting to assess the respondents' opinions of the current Romanian political field.

The Attitudes towards the Current Political Scene

In the next part we will try to see how the Romanian political scene is viewed by the respondents, both the children and their parents, separately and in a comparative perspective. This will allow us on the one hand to assess both the children and the parents' attitudes, opinions and behaviours towards politics today, but also to evaluate the degree in which the two generations seem to share the same or similar opinions. This evaluation will be taken further in the next parts, where we will attempt an explanation that will aim to clarify the influences between the two generations and to give an answer to the question of the study.

The first element we looked at was the impressions the respondents had of politics as they saw them nowadays in Romania. When asked to define the political scene in 3 words, the majority of the respondents chose negative words such as "a lie" (8 occurrences), "corrupted" (5 occurrences), "hidden interests" (4 occurrences), "manipulation" (4 occurrences), "thievery", "incompetence", "hypocrisy", "nepotism". The qualifications of the parents and children coincided in most cases, with the parent and the child giving similar descriptions or sometimes even the same adjectives. Two cases draw our attention, with both the parent and the children choosing positive or neutral words such as "democratic", "liberal", "transparent" or "ambiguous" to describe the political scene. All four respondents stated in the beginning of the interview that they were very interested in politics (4 or 5), with one "couple" participating in the last elections and the other not having participated. These reports of the fact that both seem to have given positive or neutral characterisations of the Romanian political scene show us that the opinions seem to be shared by the child and his

parent as there were no inadvertences between one and the other's descriptions, in the context where most of the respondents seem to bare a very negative opinion of the political field. This fact, coupled with the fact that the children's main information source besides the media are the parents, could also contribute to confirming the fact that the family political socialisation has a strong impact on the child.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to assess their trust in the politicians and describe them in 3 words. While the evaluation of politics received a few positive appreciations, the evaluations of the politicians received only negative qualifications. The words used were "liars", "corrupted", "incompetent", "indifferent", "thieves", "selfish", "superficial" etc. First, the confidence in the politicians is shared by the children and their parents to an almost identical pattern. Many children gave almost the same qualifications as their parents (ex: A.S., 16, F, high school student: "liars, incompetent, indifferent" – her mother, M.S., 40, registered nurse: "liars, incompetent, greedy"; A.L.V., 18, F, high school student: "Indifferent, incompetent, selfish" – her mother, M.L.V., 45, licensed nurse: "Uninterested, incapable, selfish"). We can observe same patterns of opinions and attitudes and this could be the consequence of the family political socialisation, during which the children, heavily influenced, interiorized their parents' opinions. When asked to evaluate their confidence in the politicians, the vast majority said that on a scale of 1 to 5, their confidence was of 1. A parent and a child (not related) even gave the figure -1. Only a few parents gave the number 2 (5 occurrences) and some children gave the number 3 (4 occurrences, with one child giving the number 2). The children whose parents gave a number superior than 1 to evaluate their trust in the politicians also gave a number superior to 1, although in all cases, the descriptions they made of the politicians were not positive or even neutral. Taking into consideration the fact that the interviews were conducted separately and usually one shortly after the other, we can assume that the parent and the child did not influence one another in their answers. Hence this proves again the transmission of similar attitudes towards politics from children to parents. The fact that the words used to describe the politicians or the political field are often common, similar or identical comes to support even more this conclusion.

We have chosen to ask the opinion of both parents and children on a few other topics in order to see on the one hand what is the direction they are oriented towards in their attitudes concerning present politics, but also the manner in which the younger generation seems to follow the older generation's behavioural patterns. The respondents were asked how they viewed the integration of Romania in supranational organizations such as the EU and NATO. On this matter, the answers varied from disagreement to total agreement, going through answers of the type "yes, but". We were able to find in the respondents' answers cases of extreme similarity between the two generations. For instance, C.T., 49, F, actress, believes that the integration of Romania to these organizations is a "disaster, because the tendency towards globalization is a mere reduction to a common denominator, abnormal, only to the benefit of a few influence circles"; her son, T.P., 21, undergraduate student, also believes that "it was not a good step as all countries should not be considered alike". M.S., 42, registered nurse, believes that "it was good, but we don't see any results", while her daughter, A.S., 16, high school student, thinks that "the integration was a good step, but for the moment there is no visible change for the better". A.R., 22, F, research assistant and her mother C.D., 52, accountant, both believe that Romania's adhesion benefits the country's economy, hence it represents a positive step; F.G., 52, hospital attendant and her son, C.O., 23, mechanic, both believe the integration was necessary in order

to "align to the international requirements". We can see therefore that in some cases, the parent and the child both share the same opinions, which can obviously be a result of the family political socialisation. In other cases however, the opinions between the child and the parent are evidently different. To give some examples, a parent (L.G., 44, M, telecommunications engineer) believes that the integration of Romania in such organizations is a good step and represents "the link with civilization", while his daughter (S.G., 15, high school student), sees the integration as a "pretext to fructify dishonest deeds". Similarly, S.C., 23, F, translator, believes that the adhesion was "not a good thing because we don't have the necessary professionals to manage the funds received from the institutions or the obligations we have to meet", while her father, N.C., 54, M, electrician, agrees with the adhesion because "it represents an increase in the level of security". On the contrary, S.T., 23, M, journalist believes that the integration was a good step to "reconnect us to more developed countries and learn from them", while his mother, O.T., 55, accountant, believes that "we didn't have a choice and we don't feel any improvement". The answers given by the children and parents to this question seem to confirm only up to some point the hypothesis of the transmission of the attitudes and behaviours from parents to children. Although in some cases, the opinions are similar or even identical, there are quite a few cases where one has a positive opinion and the other has a negative one. We can explain those cases by looking at the answers given to the question of the frequency of the discussions concerning politics in the family. We observe the fact that the children who gave different answers than their parents are usually those who affirm not carrying too many discussions with their parents and cite as information sources for political events other instances than the family or the parents. Hence we can assume that the dissimilar opinions were triggered by the influence of other socialising agencies than the family such as the school, the workplace, the peers or the media.

The answers to the question "in what direction do you think Romania is heading to?" can be analyzed similarly with those to the precedent question. Some of the respondents give similar answers, revealing the fact that the political socialisation process functioned in their case by the transmission of similar attitudes and opinions. V.C., 25, F, jurist, believes that Romania is "hopefully heading in a good direction", while her mother, C.C., 44, company manager, states that Romania is heading in a "good direction, despite some unavoidable problems". The child also stated that carries political discussions with her parents and judged that her first information source concerning political issues is the parental agency. On the same pattern, V.I., 43, F, hospital attendant, and her daughter, D.I., 20, undergraduate student, both believe Romania is heading "towards a disaster", with the child affirming that she does not discuss very often politically-related matters, but when she does it is only with her parents, who also represent her main source of information. Conversely, C.C., 23, F, journalist, states that she does not know exactly in what direction Romania heads to, but not a very positive one, whereas her father, A.C., 49, engineer, believes that "Romania will become a reformed state, with a consolidated economy". The child stated that she does not speak politics with her parents and that her main sources of information concerning politics were the media and school. Similarly, S.C., 23, F, translator, believes that "if the political class will not reform and really start working, we will not get out of the crisis and it will be very bad", while her father, N.C., 54, electrician, believes that Romania heads towards "a free and competitive market". In this case also the two affirm not carrying too often discussions on political matters. The child stated she got informed concerning politics only through the media. We

can thus conclude that in the families where there seem to be little talks concerning politics, there is a highest chance that the child will not share the same opinions as the parent. When openly asked if they believe they share the same opinions with their parents, all children unanimously responded that they shared at least up to some point their parents' opinions:

"I as well as my parents am liberal, but this was not imposed to me. Probably living in the same environment, I was influenced. For instance, at this moment, neither I nor my parent sympathise with any political party, as we believe they have all deviated from their basic principles" (A.T., 23, F, master student).

In other cases, the child shares only one parent's opinions:

"My mother and I share the same opinions about the President, whereas my father and my brother both share opposite opinions. We have had many polemics in the family because of this" (S.T., 23, M, journalist).

Even a child who affirm not really carrying political discussions with her parents (her father confirmed her statement, although both say being very interested in politics), says that

"I share the same opinions with my parents but not totally because I believe I can create my own opinions. But our opinions are the same concerning the recent events, the economic crisis and the scandals, the situation of the governors and their failures as well as opinions of the past regime, the Ceaușescu couple etc" (S.C., 23, F, translator).

We can deduce from here that although the respondents believes she can form her own opinions, the enumeration of domains concerning which she shares the same opinions as her parents contradicts her, as she numbered virtually all the main political issues. V.C., 25, F, jurist, states she shares the same opinions as her parents "in a proportion of 60%" but her answers concerning her main political opinions are almost the same as her parent's.

We can conclude this analysis with two remarks: on the one hand, many of the respondents have a negative opinion about the politicians with some of the respondents being very pessimistic about Romania's present and future. Also, the children's answers reproduce in many occasions those of their parents, which again confirms our hypothesis according to which the children's opinions of the current regime are heavily influenced by their parents'. In the next part, we will assess the children and the parents' opinions, attitudes and behaviours concerning the communist regime. We will see up to what point these attitudes are reproduced between the two generations. This would allow us to give a possible answer to the question of the influence of the parents' political socialisation made during the communist regime on the current socialisation of their children.

The Views on Communism

This part of the interview was aimed at assessing both the parents and the children's opinions concerning the communist regime, and this with multiple purposes.

First, just like the rest of the questions of the interview, we aimed at evaluating the degree in which the parents and the children share the same opinions, having already presented in the first part of the study a theoretical approach of the importance of the family socialisation. Moreover, we know that the younger generation was born or at least "opened its eyes" in a post-communist Romania, with claims of transition towards a democratic regime. Hence, this generation has by no means lived or known anything about the communist regime in Romania. Its information could only come from the political socialisation process, from the various agencies which contributed to transmitting communism-related knowledge to the children. As we have already seen, school seems to have played a small part in the political socialisation of children in Romania. Although they received information about politics in general and the communist regime in particular, it is difficult to tell up to what point this contributed significantly to forming a precise attitude or behaviour towards communism. Hence we will assess the parent and the child's opinions concerning a few facts regarding the communist regime which demand to the respondent less to invoke knowledge, but rather attitudes and opinions. First we will compare the results we found for the two generations putting an emphasis on the influence which seems to exist or not between the two. Then we will examine in a more encompassing way the possible consequences of the parents' behaviour over the children's attitudes towards politics today.

First, the parents were asked what they remembered having learnt in school which was related to the regime, in order to understand what part of their school political socialisation they most retained. Many of the respondents recalled the fact that in school, the "teachers tried to implement to the pupils the idea that the communist regime was the best" (C.C., 44, F, company manager) "in the formation as citizen of the members of the society" (N.C., 54, M, electrician). The parents also remembered that they had

"learnt that the PCR was the leading force of the Romanian people and that the communist regime was the only one who could assure a state equilibrium" (C.T., 49, F, actress).

Many respondents also invoked communist history:

"Instead of social sciences, we learnt dialectic materialism, Lenin and the ideology of the communist party, poems (dirt) about harvesting, wheat, the country and the beloved *conducător*" (O.T., 55, F, accountant).

Also, the personality cult of the Ceaușescu couple was enumerated by quite a few parents, along with the inexistence of the private property and the equality of the individuals. Two of the respondents cited Lenin's saying "learn, learn and learn". Those descriptions encompass many of the main traits of the communist totalitarian regime in Romania. This proves that its past influence remains vivid in the minds of the parents. We will try to observe in the following how the communist regime is remembered by the parents, whose youth took place during that regime. We will also assess the children's opinions, in order to see the influences.

When asked what they told to their children about the communist regime, many of the parents recalled almost only bad elements. They enumerated "censorship of information and denunciation as an attribute of patriotism" (A.C., 49, M, engineer), "censorship, torture, the lack of elementary conditions for a normal life" (O.T., 55, F,

accountant), "about the shortages and the lack of freedom of expression" (C.C., 44, F, company manager), "rationalized food" (M.P., 51, M, inspector), "the demolition of churches" (M.S., 40, F, registered nurse). None of the parents stated they had not told anything about the past regime to their child and none of them listed positive elements. Also, when asked to characterize in 3 words the communist regime in Romania, all the respondents (parents and children) invariably offered pejorative adjectives such as "obscure", "frustrating", "dark", "terrorist", "anachronistic", "repressive", "dictatorial", "bad" or associated it with "humiliation", "persecution", "censorship", "lie", "duplicity", "propaganda", "fear" and "manipulation". These characterizations were made by both the parents and the children. However, the answers of the children when asked what their parents had told them about the former regime let us discover what they interiorized from their parents' stories. When asked what they parents had told them about the communist regime, half of the children enumerated positive elements such as the existence of a workplace for everybody, the safety,

"there was safety and silence at that time, there was no stress about tomorrow and although one could not find many things to but, everybody could afford to buy something to eat" (A.D., 21, F, undergraduate student).

This shows that on the one hand the parents also gave prestige answers by only recalling negative elements, but also that the children seem to have also well interiorized the good elements of the regime, besides of the negative ones.

To prove this possibility and avoid the possibility of prestige answers, the respondents were asked what they believed was good during the former regime and what part of it should exist today. The answering pattern proves to be varied for this question. Many respondents evoked the fact that the state assured an employment and a house for everybody. Some also recalled the safety on the streets and the fact that "education was made more seriously" (A.R., 22, F, research assistant and her mother, C.D., 52, accountant). Usually, the respondents seemed to be nostalgic about the security the communist regime offered for the population and the fact that they did not have to fight to receive benefits, as they were either assured by the regime, either unreachable for them. We can notice only two parent-children couples who said that nothing was good during that regime and nothing should exist or be reproduced today. In 4 cases, one of the respondents stated nothing was good and should exist today, whereas the other one named something, be it the workplace, the house or the safety. In 3 of the four cases, it was the child who stated that nothing was good, and the parent who named at least one element. This could show that the child was able to detach from his or her parents' opinions and use the political socialisation made through other instances in order to form their own distinct opinion about communism. However it is interesting to note that most of the children gave the same answers as their parents: "The fact that those who finished school had a workplace assured should also happen today" (A.S., 16, F, high school student).

The respondents were also asked about the "utility" of the Revolution of December 1989. Most of them, parents and children, said that the revolution was useful ("Yes, because a burden cannot be carried forever" – C.T., 49, F, actress; "Yes, to release the population from communism" – her son T.P., 21, undergraduate student) and that it "opened the road towards freedom" (M.L.V., 45, F, licensed nurse). Many of the respondents added that the bloodshed could have been avoided: "It could have been a velvet revolution" (C.O., 23, M, mechanic). Also, when asked to detail their opinion,

we can observe the fact that some of the respondents nuance it by saying that it was only partially useful, as "we can see today that the good we were all hoping for is still not there yet and I don't know if it will ever be" (C.D., 52, F, accountant) or "what came afterwards was a mere reproduction of a part of the past regime" (M.P., 51, M, inspector). Moreover, most of the respondents (both parents and children), believe that the process and execution of the Ceaușescu couple was "a useless masquerade, which served to wipe off some traces" (M.D., 47, F, accountant), as "a cruelty I do not agree with" (M.S., 40, F, registered nurse) or a "sin done on Christmas day" (D.I., 20, F, undergraduate student). The possibility of the re-creation of the Romanian Communist Party triggered very strong negative reactions: "No way!" (M.L.V., 40, F, licensed nurse), "No chance" (L.G., 44, M, telecommunication engineer), "That's aberrant" (S.G., 15, F, high school student), "Impossible" (Z.I., 55, F, economist). A respondent explained that "its action would be without any effect on the political scene, its ideology being obsolete and condemned by history" (A.C., 49, M, engineer). A single parent – child couple did not seem very opposed to this perspective. The child believes that "today, we also live more or less in communism, even if a less openly declared communism, but subliminal and manipulator" (S.C., 23, F, translator), while her father declares that "if they would find adepts, there's no problem" (N.C., 53, M, electrician).

In 2006, following a report of a commission, Romanian president Traian Băsescu took the initiative of officially condemning communism for the acts it perpetrated against the Romanian population. The opinions of the respondents are divided. Some of them agreed with the symbolic dimension of this gesture: "I totally agree. If we only look at all the confiscations, we can easily see that many injustices were made" (V.C., 25, F, jurist). Often, the parents and the children seem to share the same opinions. V.C.'s mother stated that "I agree. The first steps after the fall of communism should have been the condemnation of its leaders" (C.C., 44, F, company manager). Many believe it was only a formal gesture made by the president in order to ameliorate his own image:

"Communism must indeed be condemned because it limits the access to information and knowledge and suppresses the expression of public opinion, but what we have nowadays represents a communist society under the name of a capitalist society based on competition and freedom of choice. The politicians who condemn communism are communists themselves" (M.D., 47, F, accountant).

Her daughter believes that

"most people who condemn communism do it in order to manipulate the population by turning to the experiences before '89. Yes, communism must be somehow blamed, but today the damages made by a masked capitalism are equivalent to those made by communism" (A.D., 21, F, undergraduate student).

We can hereby recognize clearly the thinking pattern of the mother and the daughter, whose answers are very similar. There are virtually no cases of dissimilarity between the answer of the child and that of the parent. This confirms once again the theory of the influence of the parental agency on the political socialisation of the children. However, the respondents seem to be confused about what to believe

concerning communism. They seem to be trapped between a blamed communist regime and a praised democracy in which they do not trust too much for their future and where they cannot find the well-founded.

CONCLUSIONS

The study aimed generally at assessing the way the political socialisation of the young generation today in Romania is shaped. We have hypothesized the fact that the family is the main political socialisation agency and that its influence is visible in the reproduction of similar opinions, attitudes and behaviours concerning the political field.

Moreover, taking Romania as a case study, we have shown that this country went through major political changes in the last half of century. The communist totalitarian regime installed in the late 1940s collapsed in 1989, making room for a difficult transition towards democracy. Many elements of the communist regime were imposed over the population through various means of political socialisation such as the propaganda through the media and school, in the case of the youngsters. Moreover, every individual had to adapt to the totalitarian society, to the oppression, to the shortages. The values internalized in a family were actually the attitudes or the practices meant to assure the survival or the advance in such a regime. When the regime collapses, the whole population is submitted to a resocialisation process which is long lasting and supposes many transformations in the way of thinking, acting and behaving of the individuals towards the political field and everyday life. The system of norms and values changes completely and the citizens must interiorize the new system which was completely unknown until then.

The second hypothesis of this study was that the political socialisation of the parents of the youngsters, which was made during the communist regime, had a strong influence on the political socialisation of the children today in Romania. In order to try to confirm the two hypotheses we have proceeded to a number of semi-structured interviews conducted with parents as well as children (in couples of parent and children, in order to observe more easily the existence or the lack of influence). These interviews overtly evaluated the respondents' interest for politics and how it is manifested, their opinions towards some elements of the Romanian political scene as well as their attitudes towards communism. Through their answers, we have tried to see on the one hand up to what point the answers of the children coincide with those of the parents. This allowed us to give a resolution to the first hypothesis. On the other hand, we aimed at observing the reminiscences from the communist socialisation in the case of the parents, and their reproduction in the opinions of the children. This allowed us to evaluate the foundation of the second hypothesis.

After having studied the answers given by the respondents, we can conclude that the first hypothesis is confirmed. In most cases, the general direction of the children's answers was very similar to that of their parent. In many cases, even the answers concerning precise matters were similar. Children used similar expressions as their parents to characterize politicians, they seemed to share their parents' views on communism and their interest in politics was close to that of their parents: a child whose parents are very interested in politics has many chances of also becoming very interested in the field, whereas a child whose family does not put an accent on the

importance of this domain will difficultly become more concerned in it. Also, a child whose family seems more nostalgic about the communist regime will reproduce at least up to some point this attitude. We must however note the fact that children do not simply reproduce parents' behaviours, they are not passive in the political socialisation process and do not simply imitate their parents. They use all the political socialisation agencies in order to form their opinions. But what we have been able to notice is the fact that the parental one seems the most powerful of all and the result of the political socialisation process, which is the formation of the political culture, is most influenced by the family. However, what is interesting is the fact that the children seem not to be conscious about this high influence of the family, of which they cannot subtract from, even if they do not comprehend it.

In order to demonstrate the second hypothesis, we must also understand what communist reminiscences suppose. Rudolf Bahro conceptualized one of the first elements which stood out from the respondents' answers as being a distinctive trait of "real socialism"¹, and this is the passivity, alienation and lack of private initiative or self expression in the political realm: the principle of subordination². The respondents, especially the parents but a good part of the children also presented this kind of attitude, firmly rejected the possibility of getting actively involved in a political activity and in some cases even finding it "dirty" and believing it was not a "serious" activity. This is clearly reminiscence of the past regime, when the main part of the population was forcefully made a party member, but at the same time had no real power to change anything whatsoever. Some of the children (usually those whose parents are more interested in politics) attempted to get actively involved, but renounced for various reasons, some of them "reaching to their parents' conclusions" about politics. Furthermore, the vote is considered rather important by the respondents, although this could represent a prestige answer, as many of them nuance this by saying that they often have nobody to choose as all of the candidates would be similar. This way of thinking might represent a consequence of the voting behaviour during the communist regime, when the options were limited and the candidates were all coming from one single party, hence the electors had virtually no possibility to opt for any kind of political change. Also, the huge majority of the respondents opted for a heavily interventionist state, believing it should be involved in all realms, starting with economy. Moreover, they also believed that the practices of the communist regime such as that of assuring each individual a workplace and a home should reproduce nowadays. Hence the need of a leader to take the decisions for them is clearly visible from the answers of the respondents, which represented one of the main traits of the Romanian communist regime. Obedience is a trait observable in the attitudes of the respondents, who do very little to express their discontent for the regime and basically wait for the situation to improve on its own or with the help of others. The nostalgia for the communist regime is based mainly on the fact that it contributed to assuring some basic needs the individuals have to struggle for in a democratic regime. The fact that the children state their opinions in this direction is most likely to represent an influence of their parents, since the children have not experienced the communist regime and they present virtually the same answering pattern as their parents.

¹ Rudolf BAHRO, *Je continuerai mon chemin*, Maspero, Paris, 1979, pp. 79-93.

² *Ibidem*, pp. 79-93.

Furthermore, we can observe that virtually all respondents seem to have a very negative attitude towards the politicians and appear very unsatisfied of them. The respondents, parents as well as children, prove to have only disbelief and suspicion towards the Romanian political class. They believe the politicians do everything in their own interest, without caring about the population. When asked why they believed that Romania's current level is inferior to that of other former communist countries, most of the respondents put the blame for this situation on the politicians, for stealing, being incapable or doing everything exclusively in their own interest. Only two respondents (parents) believed it was because of the mentalities of the whole population that should change, or the fact that Romania departed in 1989 from a lower level (politically, economically as well as in other fields) than other former communist countries. This attitude betrays a general irresponsibility of the respondents, which is, again according to Bahro, a characteristic of the individual behaviour in a socialist society.

To analyze the situation in the light of Goffman's theory¹, the Romanian citizen could be assimilated with the internees of an asylum: completely dependent, with very little contact with the outer world, dominated by stereotypes and feeling inferior and weak as compared to the "personnel", in our case the political elite during the communist regime. After its collapse, the same citizen became free, but this freedom made them helpless, fearful and suspicious, not knowing what to do with it, how to behave, how to comprehend it². A totalitarian regime like the Romanian one contributes heavily to destroying the civil society and controlling the individuals even in the smallest dimensions of their private space. The generalized fear determines people often to hide their opinions and opt for not getting too much involved in the public sphere. The fact that many respondents gave at some point prestige answers could demonstrate this fear of expressing their own opinions and being blamed for them.

Also, the respondents seem to long for an equalization of the status of the individuals, especially from an economic perspective. They are suspicious about the richer and believe they must have had illicit activities in order to reach such a status, because in the communist regime, the only way to succeed was to be corrupted, to "find a way" to obtain different goods or benefits and, as a respondent said, "everybody managed somehow to get what they wanted through under-the-table manoeuvres". The idea of the uniformization of everybody's status was one of the fundamentals of the communist regime, who sought to blend every individual in a huge community where any political self would be wiped out, annihilated³.

These elements are part of the political socialisation of the parents' generation and there is a high chance they might have transmitted it to their descendents through the powerful family socialisation process. This could be due to the fact that as we have already mentioned, the resocialisation process is a difficult one and it is long lasting, sometimes even surpassing the limits of one generation. The children educated by the generation who was born, grew up and lived under such a regime will be trapped between the two ways of thinking, which is basically what we were able to observe

¹ Erving GOFFMAN, *Aziluri: eseuri despre situația socială a pacienților psihiatrici și a altor categorii de persoane instituționalizate*, Rom. transl. by Anacalona Mândrilă, Polirom, Iași, 2004, p. 8.

² *Ibidem*.

³ Dan RUSU, "The Political Socialisation of Youth and Children...cit.", p. 5.

through our interviews. What is interesting is the fact that we cannot really link in any way the education level of the parents and the degree in which they seem to have more or less detached from the communist political culture and interiorised the democratic one. What we can however notice is the fact that the children seem to reproduce to an important extent their parents' political behaviours. Therefore, we can say that our second hypothesis is partly confirmed. We can recognize some patterns of behaviour and attitude of the children towards the present political realm which seem to derive from their parents' communist political socialisation. We could assume that the degree in which this is visible corresponds with the degree of achieved resocialisation of their parents.

It would be interesting to assess further on what are the elements which determine the way the resocialisation of the parents to the values of a democratic system takes place. A broader sample of respondents and a focus on the way their resocialisation was conducted could give an answer to this question.

Appendix

The Sample Composition: the Respondents' Profiles

Nr. Crt.	Initials	Age	Sex	Occupation	Education level	Status
1a	A.R.	22	F	Research assistant	B.A. in Geography	Child
1b	C.D.	52	F	Accountant	B.A. in Economy	Parent
2a	C.C.	23	F	Journalist	M.A. in Political Sciences in progress	Child
2b	A.C.	49	M	Engineer	B.A. level	Parent
3a	S.C.	23	F	Translator	M.A. in Communication in Foreign Languages	Child
3b	N.C.	54	M	Electrician	High school	Parent
4a	P.P.	21	M	Student	B.A. in Engineering in progress	Child
4b	M.P.	51	M	Inspector (retired)	High school	Parent
5a	S.T.	23	M	Journalist	B.A. in Political Sciences	Child
5b	O.T.	55	F	Accountant	High School	Parent
6a	D.I.	20	F	Student	B.A. in Psychology in progress	Child
6b	V.I.	43	F	Hospital attendant	High school	Parent
7a	A.T.	23	F	Student	M.A. in Political Sciences in progress	Child
7b	D.T.	58	F	Inspector	High school	Parent
8a	V.C.	25	F	Jurist	B.A. in Law	Child
8b	C.C.	44	F	Company manager	High school	Parent
9a	I.E.	23	M	Student	M.A. in Political Sciences in progress	Child
9b	M.E.	51	F	Laboratory assistant	High school	Parent
10a	L.P.	23	F	Student	M.A. in Communication	Child
10b	M.P.	62	M	Research engineer	Ph.D. in Chemistry	Parent
11a	A.D.	21	F	Student	B.A. in Economy	Child
11b	M.D.	47	F	Accountant	High School	Parent
12a	A.L.V.	18	F	Student	11 th grade	Child
12b	M.L.V.	45	F	Licensed nurse	B.A. in Nursing; B.A. in Psychology	Parent
13a	S.G.	15	F	Student	9 th grade	Child
13b	L.G.	44	M	Engineer	B.A. in Telecommunications	Parent
14a	T.P.	21	M	Student	B.A. in Filmmaking	Child
14b	C.T.	49	F	Actress	B.A. in Acting	Parent
15a	G.I.	16	M	Student	10 th grade	Child
15b	Z.I.	55	F	Economist	B.A. in Economy	Parent
16a	C.O.	23	M	Mechanic	High school	Child
16b	F.G.	52	F	Hospital attendant	Middle School	Parent
17a	A.S.	16	F	Student	10 th grade	Child
17b	M.S.	40	F	Registered nurse	B.A. in Nursing	Parent
18a	I.Z.	19	F	Student	12 th grade	Child
18b	V.Z.	55	F	Pharmacy Nurse	Sanitary Technical School	Parent
19a	E.C.	22	M	Student	B.A. in Management in progress	Child
19b	A.A.	57	F	Nurse	Sanitary Technical School	Parent